

The SPORTS PINK

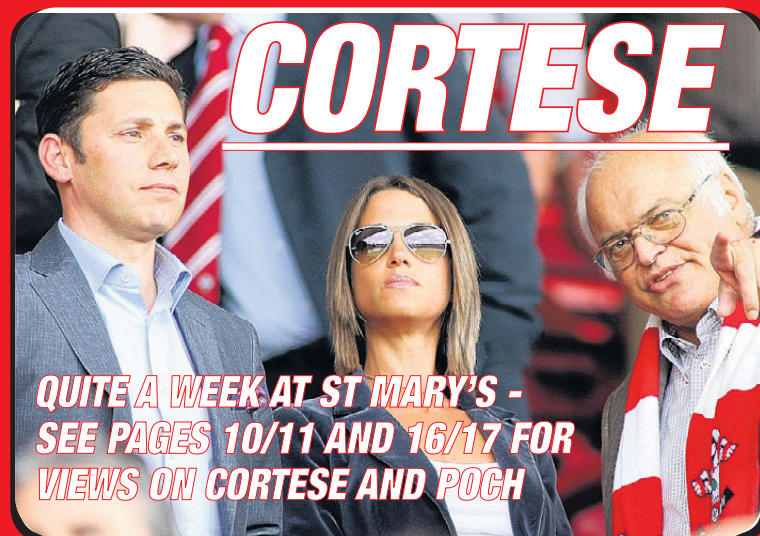
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Supporting **LOCAL** sport **Daily Echo**

CHERRIES: GRABBAN THE HERO AS CHERRIES GRAB A POINT

Report: page 19

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**QUITE A WEEK AT ST MARY'S -
SEE PAGES 10/11 AND 16/17 FOR
VIEWS ON CORTESE AND POGH**

SUNDERLAND 2 SAINTS 2

SAINTS let a two goal lead slip as they drew 2-2 against Sunderland at the Stadium of Light in the first game of the post-Nicola Cortese era.

After a week where Saints had been in the headlines for the resignation of their executive chairman and the appointment of club owner Katharina Liebherr to the board, they had complete and utter domination of the majority of the

game against the Black Cats and could have had it easily sewn up by half time. They paid the price for failing to do that as goals from Jay Rodriguez, pictured celebrating right, and Dejan Lovren were cancelled out by strikes from Fabio Borini and Adam Johnson as it ended all square.

To make things worse both Gaston Ramirez and Lovren were stretched off towards the end with very serious looking ankle injuries.

● FULL STORY AND PICTURES: PAGES 2-3



SAINTS BROUGHT BACK TO EARTH

TERRY PAINE



**Saints legend's
EXCLUSIVE column**
See pages 8-9

NON-LEAGUE



**All the latest non-
league news**
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CRICKET



**Hants trio in with
England chance**
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DOUBLE INJURY BLOW FOR SAINTS: SEE PAGES 4&5

Saints Spotlight

SUNDERLAND 2 SAINTS 2: SAINTS

DOMINANT LET BLACK



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To make things worse both Gaston Ramirez and Lovren were stretchered off towards the end with very serious looking ankle injuries.

Saints totally dominated possession of the ball in the early stages and it paid off as they took the lead after just four

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minutes. It was courtesy of a truly wonderful finish from Jay Rodriguez.

He was involved in the build up, blocking an attempted clearance on the edge of the Sunderland area. The ball looped up high in the air and a header was won by Morgan Schneiderlin.

It dropped to **RODRIGUEZ** 20 yards out and he took two touches – one on his chest and the other as it dropped – to bring the ball under control and then quickly struck a right footed volley that arrowed past Vito Mannone and into the bottom corner.

Lee Cattermole became the first player in the book after ten minutes for the most cynical foul you could ever wish to see as he hacked down Rodriguez as he threatened to

break away.

It was total Saints domination and they had another half chance as Mannone scuffed a clearance from out wide on the right to Jack Cork. He tried to fire home from 40 yards into the empty net but his effort went over the bar.

Sunderland were in total disarray and Saints in total control.

They almost bagged a second goal they fully deserved as the ball broke to Rodriguez in the area but his half volley was blocked by a last ditch challenge.

They also had appeals for a penalty waved away as Jose Fonte went down with John O'Shea's arm around him.

Luke Shaw was the next to come close with a deflected shot that Mannone blocked



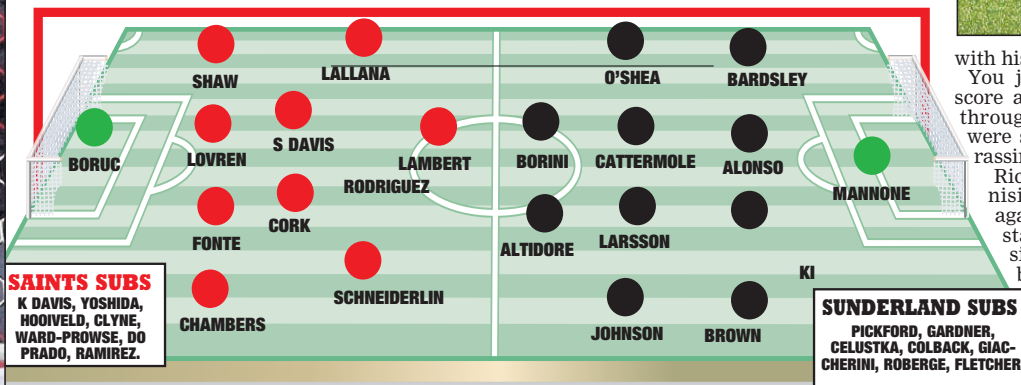
with his legs at the near post. You just felt Saints had to score again soon as they cut through Sunderland who were so awful it was embarrassing.

Rickie Lambert came agonisingly close as Saints again played around the statuesque Sunderland side, Adam Lallana's ball round the corner giving him the chance to fire across goal but just off target.

Lambert was the creator on 29 minutes. He caught Wes Brown in possession and squared to Rodriguez who took it first time right footed from just inside the box but it was too close to Mannone who got down to his left to save.

Finally Saints did make it 2-0 on 31 minutes.

It was more utterly pathetic



MAURICIO Pochettino made one change from the side that defeated West Brom 1-0 for the trip to Sunderland.

Calum Chambers missed the game against the Baggies due to illness but was available

TEAM NEWS

again for the meeting with the Black Cats and was straight back in the side.

Nathaniel Clyne was the man

to miss out as he dropped to the bench.

Victor Wanyama was still missing through injury while Dani Osvaldo was serving the final match of his three-game ban.



SUNDERLAND v SAINTS REACTION - SEE PAGES 4-5

Saints Spotlight

HELD IN MATCH THEY TOTALLY CONTROLLED

SAINTS CATS OFF



JUMP: Steve Davis on the run for Saints, above. Right: Adam Lallana in action.

defending from Sunderland as Steve Davis put in an out swinging corner from the right and Dejan **LOVREN** was allowed time to volley acrobatically into the far corner.

However, Sunderland scored with their first attack of the game just a minute later.

Adam Johnson chipped in a ball from the right for Fabio **BORINI** whose run broke the offside trap. He controlled on his chest and from eight yards out quickly shot on the turn into the turf and across goal where Artur Boruc couldn't reach it diving to his right.

Suddenly the previously angry and frustrated crowd at the Stadium of Light were buzzing as their side, who could have deservedly been four or five goals down, were just one behind.

Saints regained their composure and control of the ball fairly quickly, and Lambert forced Mannone to turn wide a free kick. But when

the whistle went there was actually a tinge of disappointment that a half they had dominated so completely had yielded just a one goal lead.

Sunderland came out after the break looking a little more purposeful but it Luke Shaw who was the first to get an effort on target, a rasping drive from 20 yards that was straight at Mannone.

Calum Chambers also had an effort from distance but again Mannone was equal to it diving low to his left.

He was stretched still further on 56 minutes as a free flowing Saints move ended with Rodriguez side footing a right footed finish first time from the edge of the area that Mannone saved, this time down to his right.

Mannone was in business yet again moments later, this one a low stop from Jose Fonte's downward header from a free kick.

It was all Saints once more and Shaw drilled in a low shot across

goal that Mannone just about managed to turn wide.

Rodriguez got across at the near post to flick Lambert's low right wing cross round the corner on 61 minutes but it flew into the side netting.

Again Saints were so dominant but needed another goal to give themselves a cushion they more than deserved.

Sunderland made a double change on 63 minutes with Craig Gardner and Jack Colback on for Cattermole and Sebastian Larsson.

They thought it had paid immediate dividends and they had levelled a minute later as Borini broke and finished low past Boruc but the linesman's flag had been quite correctly raised for offside.

Saints paid the price for not being further ahead as Sunderland equalised against the run of play on 71 minutes.

The Black Cats worked the ball all the way across the face of the

area from left to right where **JOHNSON** picked it up. He jinked into the area and out onto his right foot and smashed in a shot.

It was fiercely hit but straight at Boruc who could only divert it against the inside of the post and into the net in a disappointing moment for the Saints keeper.

Both sides made substitutions with Steven Fletcher replacing Altdore for Sunderland and surprisingly the influential Lallana coming off for Gaston Ramirez.

Boruc had to make a good save to turn wide from Gardner as suddenly Sunderland looked like they believed they could get a winner.

He did even better moments later to block bravely at the feet of Fletcher as the striker looked set to finish from close range.

Saints suffered a horrible double blow as both Ramirez and Lovren went down injured at opposite ends of the pitch with injuries so serious they were both stretchered off.

Ramirez's was sustained as Brown slid in and made a last ditch challenge on him on the edge of the area. He got the ball but as he continued to slide he caught Ramirez on the ankle.

Play continued up to the other end where Lovren went into a challenge with Fletcher. Again it was a fair one but he came off badly, also carried off with an injured ankle.

Saints brought on James Ward-Prowse and Maya Yoshida to replace them.

It all meant a long break in play and seven minutes of stoppage time at the end of the game.



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READ TERRY PAINE ON PAGES 6-7

Saints Spotlight

Poch 'proud of players'

MAURICIO Pochettino admitted his disappointment that Saints only got a point out of a game they dominated at Sunderland.

The Saints boss was delighted that his players bounced back from a tough week that has seen boardroom upheaval at the club with a fine performance at the Stadium of Light.

But he was frustrated that the game ended in a 2-2 draw when it might have been a very handsome Saints win.

He said: "I am quite disappointed with that point. I think



we deserved to win the match.

"In the end we leave with one point and two injuries and we hope these injuries are not as bad as they seemed."

Pochettino, who said he will try and meet Katharina Lieberr in the coming days, continued:

"I am very happy with the performance. They showed they are great professionals and they had the right attitude."

"I want to congratulate them as I have done in the past."

"I think all Southampton supporters should be very proud of their team because they played very well in light of what happened this week."



Gaston is put in hospital

GASTÓN RAMÍREZ has been taken to hospital after being injured at Sunderland.

He and Dejan Lovren were both stretchered off after picking up injuries within seconds of each other at either end of the pitch.

Saints boss Mauricio Pochettino initially said both players had been taken to hospital but the latest update from the club has revealed that Lovren didn't go to hospital and left the Stadium

of Light wearing a protective boot. Ramirez is in hospital for X-rays on his ankle.

The team were due to fly back to Southampton from Newcastle airport immediately after the game but will now wait in the north east in the hope the stricken midfielder can come back with them.

Horrific images have surfaced of Ramirez's ankle at a terrible angle after Wes Brown's challenge went through the ball and into his left leg, pictured above.

Play continued up to the other end where Lovren was injured in a challenge with Steven Fletcher.

Pochettino said: "They are being assessed at the moment so we don't need exactly what happened."

"We hope that it's not as bad as we saw from the images on the pitch."

He added: "You could see they were in a lot of pain. I saw them before going to hospital and they were in a lot of pain."

Daily Echo

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Saints Spotlight

No end to the Saints drama

A WEEK filled with drama off the pitch for Saints ended with even more on it.

In some ways, this wild game was a fitting conclusion to an incredibly eventful few days at St Mary's.

Saints will certainly be frustrated, disappointed, and perhaps even a little mystified, at not having left the Stadium of Light with all three points.

They did, however, not display any signs of a team or club in crisis.

'Meltdown' was the headline in one paper following chairman Nicola Cortese's departure on Wednesday night.

Others had spoken of a potential player "exodus", while "crisis" had seemingly become a buzzword.

But any fears supporters might have had should have calmed somewhat since then, with Mauricio Pochettino revealing

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ahead of this match that not only is he staying, but that no players had asked to leave, while owner Katharina Liebherr has publicly stated none will be sold.

Captain Adam Lallana also revealed shortly before kick-off that "the dressing room atmosphere is as good as ever. There's a great mood. Some meltdown, this."

As with any significant boardroom changes, there is obviously a certain degree of uncertainty, and also questions and issues that will need to be addressed over time.

In the coming weeks and months, though, we will get a clearer idea of how Liebherr and whoever she

appoints in senior positions will run the club.

The initial signs, though, have at least pointed towards stability rather than turmoil.

Certainly, there was no sign of any ill-effects on the players following Cortese's departure, as it had been suggested there would be in some quarters.

The opening 30 minutes of this match was perhaps as dominant a period as Saints have produced all season, if not the last few years.

They raced into a two-goal lead, and should have been even further ahead, such was the control they were exerting on the game.

Sunderland, it seemed, barely touched the ball during the opening half-an-hour, with the possession statistics at one point showing the visitors topping the 80 per cent mark.

Yet, when Fabio Borini pulled one back out of nowhere shortly after Dejan Lovren had doubled Saints' advantage, Sunderland were thrown a lifeline that they would eventually use to pull themselves to safety.

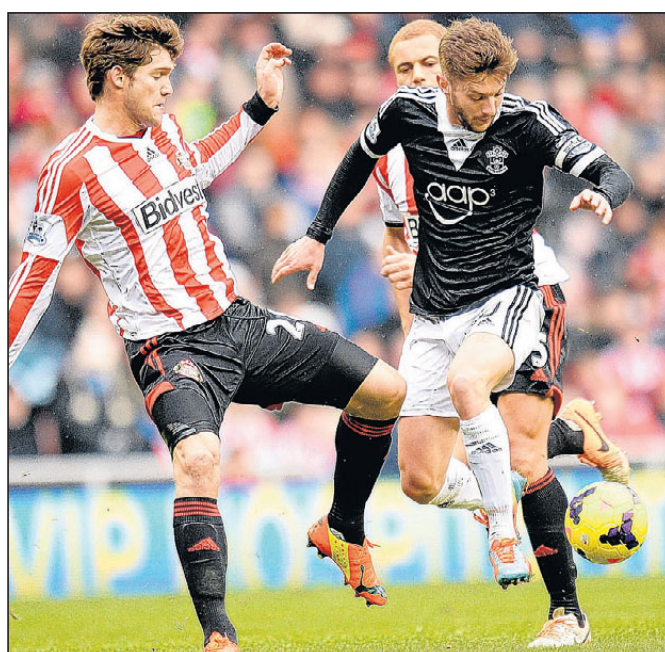
Given their dominance, Pochettino's side should have won here.

But a point was no disaster, although losing Gaston Ramirez and Lovren to serious-looking injuries in the latter stages of the contest could prove a real blow.

Like the week as a whole, though, those associated with Saints will hope that things might not turn out to be as bad as perhaps initially feared.



ON THE BALL: Gaston Ramirez takes on Sunderland.



ON TARGET: Jay Rodriguez celebrates his goal, right. Above: Adam Lallana tries some trickery.

THIS SEASON'S SAINTS STATISTICS - SEE PAGE 12

BOOK of the WEEK

Undisputed Truth: My Autobiography
By Mike Tyson

Sportsbookofthefmonth.com price: £9.00
saving 55% on rrp

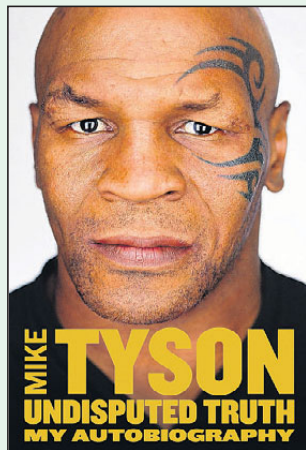
CONSIDERING how scandalously porous the United Kingdom's borders have been for the past decade-and-a-half, the irony of refusing entry to a high-profile, multi-millionaire ex-professional sportsman, on account of his criminal record, will not be lost on most people.

Mike Tyson might be the repository of several unpleasant characteristics, but it's probably fair to say that he's no benefit tourist, nor is he intent on blowing us all to smithereens.

Nevertheless, he was recently denied entry to the UK, so instead of being able to see Tyson talking about his new book 'live' as was originally intended, sports fans will have to make do with one of the most intriguing sporting memoirs ever written. Thankfully, as was the case when he was in the ring, Tyson pulls no punches in this beast of a book – at 560-odd pages, it's twice the length of the standard sporting biography.

For more than 25 years, a small industry has regularly churned out books about Tyson, but *Undisputed Truth* is the definitive article.

Of course, his story is well known. His violent, criminal childhood; remanded in a succession of institutions for youth offenders; spotted by the legendary Cus d'Amato and his subsequent rise to become boxing's



youngest-ever heavyweight world champion.

That might be enough for one man, but Tyson's complex, violent, misogynist personality ensured there had to be more. It came in spades. His marriage to Robin Givens; incessant legal battles regarding his management; a phenomenal list of women; unbelievably regular consumption of class A drugs; his unexpected loss to Buster Douglas, followed by conviction and incarceration for rape. Tyson's comeback also resulted in defeat; fearing another reverse, the former champion opted to bite a sizeable chunk out of his opponent's ear and spit it to the ground. It's easy to see why 'brutal' is the adjective most frequently used to describe Tyson.

This memoir is also brutally honest, though that doesn't mean readers will necessarily empathise with a man who blew tens of millions on drugs and prostitutes. Nevertheless, he has an incredible story to tell, which makes *Undisputed Truth* an A-list sporting tome.

QUIZ QUESTION:

We've teamed up with Sports Book of the Month and have a copy of *Undisputed Truth* to give away.

To win this week's sports book, go to their website (sportsbookofthefmonth.com) and answer the following question:

Who did Mike Tyson defeat to become boxing's youngest heavyweight world champion?

WE'RE NOT GOING HANDCART THIS IS

WELL, that's it. It's all over.

It was fun whilst it lasted but, after 127 years of fun and frolics, Southampton FC is no more.

Will the last one out of St Mary's please turn the lights off?

What's that I hear? Saints are playing this weekend?

No, that can't be, surely? The chairman's left. The club's going to hell on a handcart.

Surely there can't be football on this weekend?

Of course there is, as usual life goes on.

The players and the manager train and life at St Mary's goes on, despite so many predictions that the club will slip inevitably out of existence.

We tend to forget that Nicola Cortese was an employee, he didn't own the club.

The club is owned, and has been since Markus Liebherr's death, by his daughter Katharina.

It's amazing that the woman who many journalists predicted wanted to sell the club now wants total control of it.

It doesn't sound right, does it?

Little old Southampton, the billionaire's toy, to be traded off in a whim.

Only now, it appears, there have been machinations behind the scenes for months.

And guess what?

No one knew a thing about it.

The national press is awash with stories now, but where were these stories a week ago? A month ago?

The answer is that that all of these much-vaunted journalists didn't have a clue what was going behind closed doors at St Mary's, and they still don't.

Like it or not, Nicola Cortese was an employee of this club and, in the same brutal way Alan Pardew and Nigel Adkins left this club, now so does he.

I'm not stupid enough to think his loss isn't a major one, but the last four years have told me this club is run by professionals.

Katharina Liebherr runs a billion-pound business.

You don't do that by being an idiot.

If you read The Sun's headlines on Thursday you'd be reaching for the vallium.

"Southampton nightmare" "Manager and players to go in mass exodus."

Yep, that's right, the quality journalists who had no idea what was going on at this club are now telling us the future.

Sorry, chaps, but if Cortese's departure left you on the back foot you'll excuse me if I take what you're saying now with a massive pinch of salt.



We've been here a hundred times, dear Saints fan, now that "Fill in the blanks" has left the club. Southampton FC is on a slippery slope.

But we're not, are we? We're still here, still thriving, because this is a great football club.

Always was, always will be.

I'm not so naïve as to think

Nicola Cortese's departure isn't a blow, he was an amazing chairman who dragged this club kicking and screaming back into life.

But he is replaceable, as was Alan Pardew and Nigel Adkins. How many experts predicted a mass exodus when those two left?

Life still went on.

I'm of the opinion that some

Saints fans just thrive on the drama.

Saints doing OK? Saints doing average? Not a peep from them.

Saints doing badly? Out they come, predicting doom and gloom and how they all told you about how everything would go wrong ages ago.

They conveniently forget the many, many times they got it wrong.

I'm talking about people who moaned and moaned about the Italian businessman who stole their stripes and didn't care about this club's history and who is now the only person who can run it.

TO HELL IN A A NEW BEGINNING



BUSINESS AS USUAL: Saints players in training after Nicola Cortese's resignation.



Yes, this is a loss, but who's to say Cortese's replacement won't be better?

In the meantime I'd like to thank the man who has transformed this club.

When Nicola Cortese took over the club it was a shambles, -10 points in League One and facing certain relegation.

Only it never happened. The club flourished, progressed, and exceeded all expectations, achieving two promotions in three years.

His involvement in the club has been nothing but a positive experience and has taken the club bottom

of League One to third in the Premier League, an astonishing achievement.

He will be sorely missed.

It may be difficult at the moment but, as Saints fans, we have to look at the situation logically and dispassionately.

At the moment national journalists are telling us that the club is on the brink and things are going to hell in a handcart.

These are the same journalists who for two years solid ridiculed Cortese and the manner in which he ran the club.

Let's not forget the fiasco about photographers in St Mary's and all

the other opportunities tabloid journalists took to have a pop at the diminutive Italian.

Now, all of a sudden, he's the future of English football and Southampton FC cannot exist without him.

It doesn't take a genius to figure out that a lot of modern day national sporting journalists know nothing about the subject matter they write about.

The harsh truth is that the only thing that interests them is space and headlines.

The Sun's headlines predicting a nightmare for Southampton is a case in point here, pure garbage

generated with the sole purpose of filling up the back page and selling newspapers.

That is their job... to sell newspapers.

This club will survive, it always has, and whilst every Portsmouth fan is rubbing their hands with glee may I remind you of one thing.

No one wanted to buy your club but you.

Nicola Cortese took a good club and made it better.

Who's to say that the new chief executive at Southampton FC won't do exactly the same.

It's not the end, it's just a new beginning...

Sports Quiz

1 Keith Hill is the manager of which League Two club?

2 Nesiasi Mataitonga recently signed for which Super League side?

3 Who did Ana Ivanovic beat to win her only grand slam final – the 2008 French Open?

4 Where do Glamorgan play their home matches?

5 In which sport will Jenny Jones compete for Great Britain at the Sochi Winter Olympics?

6 What nationality is Southampton manager Mauricio Pochettino (pictured)?



7 In what year did Martin Whitmarsh replace Ron Dennis as McLaren team principal?

8 Jonathan Brownlee won Olympic bronze at London 2012 in which event?

9 Yoan Pablo Hernandez holds the IBF title in which division?

10 Who was the leading run-scorer in Tests in 2013?

11 Where were the 1952 Olympic Games held?

12 England wicketkeeper Matt Prior plays cricket for which county?

13 How many times have Manchester City won the First Division/Premier League title?

14 'The Captain' is the nickname for which professional snooker player?

15 Which Fulham midfielder and England international started his professional career at Charlton?

16. Mauricio Pochettino was coach of which club before joining Southampton?



17. What sort of injury will keep Justin Rose, right, out of the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship?

18. Which country won the most gold medals at the 2010 Winter Olympics?

19. Which are the two non-London clubs Carlton Cole has played for during his career?

20. Which NBA team does Luol Deng play for?

ANSWERS

- 1 Rochdale; 2 London Broncos; 3 Dina Safina; 4 SWALEC Stadium; 5 Snowboard; 6 Argentina; 7 2009; 8 Michael Clarke; 9 Chris Evert; 10 Wimbledon; 11 Helsinki; 12 Three – 1936-37, 1967-68, 2011-12; 13 All Carter; 14 Scott Parker; 15 Spain; 16 Espanyol; 17 Shoulder; 18 Canada; 19 Wolves and Aston Villa; 20. The Cleveland Cavaliers.

QUOTES of the week

"I have some very unexpected but exciting news to share - Andy and I are expecting a baby." - Olympic heptathlon champion Jessica Ennis-Hill, right, announces her pregnancy.



"I'll be definitely the worst player in the competition out there. But I'll have fun. I'm playing with one of the best players in the competition. I figure it's like eating chocolate or having broccoli, it sort of equals out. Doubles, half a court. I think I can do that." - Pat Rafter announces a surprise return to grand-slam tennis after confirming he will pair up with Lleyton Hewitt in the Australian Open doubles.

"I was pretty nervous. I was copping it in the locker room. (Ivan) Lendl's a menace - he's a pest of a guy. But it's good fun. I didn't want to make an idiot of myself and I think I got through it OK." - Rafter after he and Hewitt were beaten in the first round in Melbourne.

"Sam has never quit anything he has done and why should he? He knows what he is doing." - West Ham assistant manager Neil McDonald bats away talk of Sam Allardyce leaving the club.

"Yes, we did make a bid. Yes I think he does want to come. He would add pace, power, unpredictability and a real attacking threat." - Fulham head coach Rene Meulensteen claims West Ham's Ravel Morrison wants to join him at Craven Cottage - comments which prompted the Hammers to make an official complaint to the Premier League.

"I will help him and I will try to help him to put him there. And I will tell you why. If Johnno makes the World Cup we are in the Premier League for sure." - Sunderland boss Gus Poyet rallies behind England hopeful Adam Johnson after his hat-trick sealed a 4-1 win at Fulham.

"I hear that it's been picked up a little bit, and I apologise for my comments 100 per cent. It was a heat of the moment thing. We just had words that we always have as managers, to a degree. I have apologised to him and fortunately for myself, he has accepted that." - Ex-saints boss Alan Pardew, above, says sorry for a foul-mouthed rant at Manuel Pellegrini - seen by TV cameras - during Newcastle's controversial 2-0 loss to Manchester City.



TIME FOR FOOTBALL TO

IN RECENT weeks, refereeing decisions have once again been in the media spotlight. From controversial offside calls, to penalties not given, to Brendan Rodgers questioning why a Greater Manchester referee was in charge of a Manchester City home game against Liverpool.

Being a referee must surely be one of the worst jobs in Britain.

Whatever decision you make it is going to annoy at least one group of people.

Every split second call gets analysed and dissected by millions, in an instant, on social media, and then shared for everyone to see before you blow the full time whistle.

What everyone needs to understand is this - we all make mistakes.

The smaller clubs will get the dubious calls against them and referees will have stinkers. None of this is done on purpose (well, we hope not anyway).

Unfortunately, there is nothing we can do about this.

The referee obviously needs help in game and, thanks to the FA finally bringing in video technology to goal line decisions, the tide is turning in favour of assisting referees.

However, there remains more that could be done.

Firstly, scrap and re-build the "retrospective punishment" rule. The cameras pick up on a challenge, spit, slap, punch or bites in some instances. However, the referee sees the challenge, acknowledges it, and might even book the player.

After the game, nothing can be done. The only time there can be further punishment is when none of the four officials have spotted the incident and the referee fails to report it in his notes after the game.

Surely this needs to be overhauled?

Why not make it known that, if you do something that is deemed outside of what is allowed on a football pitch, you are going to be punished after the game. This would stretch from a punch, kick or slap all the way to diving.

This is something that to start off with would see a lot of fines and bans which could stretch even a squad the size of Manchester City and Chelsea.

However, over time surely we would see a massive improvement with the in-game behaviour of players in the Premier League.

Secondly, let's get every referee to wear a microphone during a game.

I will quickly draw your attention to rugby. The ref is only approachable by one man - the captain. Decisions are explained on national TV, every conversation is recorded and from an outsiders' point of view a rugby referee is held in much higher esteem than any football ref up and down the country.

By bringing this into football, it

IN SEASONS gone by, the clash between Chelsea and Manchester United may have been a title decider.

While it may still have some impact on just where the Premier League trophy may end up in May, only one of those clubs is truly in the running. That should not take anything away from a game that has offered up plenty of drama over the years, and this Sunday's match at Stamford Bridge will hopefully be no different.

It can only be an improvement on their meeting in late August, which ranks up there as one of the worst matches of the season so far.

Both teams have undergone a transformation since then, although both managers will be the first to admit that their teams aren't quite where they want them to be.

There are promising signs, though, in both camps.

That the shining lights in each squad should hail from Belgium comes

as no surprise, given the country's somewhat "golden generation" that are plying their trade in the Premier League and abroad.

Eden Hazard and Adnan Januzaj are undoubtedly two of the form players in the league. Nifty, fleet-footed wingers, they have become their teams' match winners, and could prove the difference in what is likely to be a closely fought affair. That was the case last weekend as both players inspired their respective teams to victory.

At Hull it was Hazard that opened the scoring, grabbing his third goal in four matches as he finally starts to fulfil his potential.

After a spectacular start to life in England, his form tapered off towards the tail end of the season, as he was overshadowed by Juan Mata's string of spectacular performances.

However, after the appointment of Jose Mourinho, he was re-instated as Chelsea's main man, and that faith is starting to pay dividends.

His tally of 11 goals so far makes him the club's top scorer, and his manager should take some credit for that.

Belgium duo can light way at Bridge



His game has progressed to a new level under the tutelage of Mourinho, as he begins to realise that he can't rely on his talent alone.

The Portuguese had this to say about the 23-year old. "He trains much better, he concentrates much better. Tactically, he has had a big evolution. He understands how to put his qualities on the surface of the team. He understands the best way to hide his weaknesses."

But while he is undoubtedly a big talent, he has not always been a player for the big game. His performance against Liverpool was perhaps his finest to date, with a superbly taken

goal, but he will need more of that if he is move onto the next level. This weekend's match at Stamford Bridge provides him with just that opportunity, and in the form he's in few would bet against him stamping his authority on this one.

Lining up opposite him is another precocious young talent and, at only 18-years old, Januzaj has the world at his feet.

One of the few positives to be gleamed from Manchester United's sea-

Paine's World

The Saints legend's **EXCLUSIVE** column on all things football



would be able to highlight exactly how the referee is spoken to and how the referee speaks to players, preventing the alleged abuse Mr Clattenberg issued Adam Lallana recently.

One of the worst sights in football remains when players surround the referee after a decision is made on the football field.

In some cases, it seems like borderline bullying.

By following rugby's lead in only allowing the team captain to approach the referee, this will mean teams will not be able to take advantage of situations anymore to try and sway a referee from any future decisions to be made.

If they do, then we can draw upon

the new retrospective punishment rules discussed earlier.

Finally, wouldn't we all like to see either referees coming out and explaining their decisions after games, or a spokesperson for them, speaking to the media?

At present, after a game, everyone under the sun gets asked for his or her opinion on "what the

FOLLOW RUGBY'S LEAD



SHINING LIGHTS: Chelsea's Eden Hazard and, inset, Manchester United's Adnan Januzaj.

son so far, he has been fearless out wide while those with more experience have faltered.

He has been a breath of fresh air in a team that has looked increasingly stale, and has taken to the Old Trafford pitch like the United wide-players of yesteryear. The crowd have responded, with an expectancy every time he gets on the ball. It is a lot of pressure to heap on such young shoulders, but he has taken it in his stride.

Against Swansea he showed his versatility, drifting nomadically across the park – as has become customary with the modern wide-player.

It was his switch to the left, though, that changed the complexion of the game and allowed Shinji Kagawa to take up his more favoured central role. It was from this position that he tormented the Swansea defence, providing the cross for Valencia's opener and playing a key-role in the build-up for United's crucial second.

Moyes is clearly intent on using Januzaj's versatility to his advantage.

"Adnan can play in all the positions around the front. I speak to him a lot and he tells me he could play everywhere and he would have no problem," said Moyes.

With the return of Rooney and Van

Persie on the horizon, it will be interesting to see how Moyes decides to use his latest attacking weapon. At the tender age of 18 he does risk burnout, especially if United continue to rely on him as much as they currently do. For the time being, at least, he seems to be thriving in the added responsibility, in much the same way Wayne Rooney did upon his arrival at Old Trafford in 2004.

This game is as big as they come in the Premier League, and all eyes will be on two of the brightest talents currently plying their trade in England. Both seem set to become top, top players, but it will be interesting to see who comes out on top at Stamford Bridge.



SURROUNDED: Referee Lee Mason during the recent West Brom v Newcastle Barclays Premier League match.

would any teenager wanting to get into football want to be a referee when they see, at the highest level, the amount of abuse those men get week in week out?

These three improvements may not fully boost the recruitment levels of referees, but it will surely help improve our game that we enjoy so much.

mance being called into question, without giving them a chance to defend themselves.

At the moment, there are massive shortages of people training to be referees in this country. Why

QUOTES of the week

"I've had a very good season at an individual level. I want to be here again next year and win it again. My mum (who was in attendance) cries very easily and when I saw her crying it made me cry as well. I'm an emotional person." – Cristiano Ronaldo after winning the 2013 FIFA Ballon d'Or.

"There's been some issues in other sports with players having heart attacks. I don't know exactly why that is. In this heat, that's when you're really pushing it to your limits. You don't want to see anything bad happen to anyone." –

Andy Murray, right, urges Australian Open organisers to reconsider their playing policy in extreme heat after several players fell ill with temperatures reaching 42C in Melbourne.



"I'm here to save the club and manage the club for the benefit of the community. It will never, never be the other way round – that the community manage it for me. But if the community say go away, I promise to go away within 24 hours." – Hull owner Assem Allam threatens to walk away from the club if the FA refuses to ratify his application to change the club's name.

"At the moment Steven needs a bit of space, in the very short term he probably needs a couple of weeks away from cricket full stop.

Steven is not selectable at the moment."

– England limited-overs coach Ashley Giles urges Steven Finn, right, to take a break after he was sent home from the tour of Australia.



"(I take) a little bit of pride in it. I guess in those terms that we are making it so uncomfortable for guys, whether that's through form or fitness. In the way we've played, and the intensity, and the media build-up of a series, it's been pretty big." – Australia batsman George Bailey takes pride in England's rate of attrition during their forgettable winter tour Down Under.

"I have Will Farish who's actually a college teammate and he is now LAPD. He will be easy to spot, because he's six-four, 225 (lbs) and he just laid down his motorcycle so he has a broken wrist. He's going to have a big pink cast on his wrist, so he'll be very easy to spot." – golfer Brendan Steele describes his stand-in caddy at the Humana Classic in California after regular partner Sam Pinfold fell foul of red tape.

official was thinking giving/not giving that decision". Pundits, managers, players and even fans, but the one man who isn't given a chance to have their say is the official.

Let's give them a voice. Let them come out after the final whistle and speak to the media and explain why they made that call.

Currently what's happening is managers get annoyed by a decision, get interviewed directly after a game and say something that then gets picked up on by the media.

Before you know, it the referee or officials' name(s) is in the papers or websites with their perfor-

Saints Spotlight

Kids have been the highlight

MOPO has without doubt taken us on a level however I have been miffed at some of his decisions.

Fox IMO has been given too many chances, after baggies away game last season I would have never picked him again. Cork and Ramirez could have been given more play time this season.

For me, the job that Poch has done has been superb. He's come in, changed the way that we play, and improved the players.

Not only has he improved the team performances, but he has improved individuals as well.

Our earlier form in the league, prior to injuries to our back five was highlighted by



JACK CORK

pundits as being by far the best defensive unit in the Premier league.

Yes things slipped, but that was only to be expected.

For me the highlight of the year is how we have integrated so many kids into our first team, and have many more waiting to step up.

Huge credit has to go to Poch for the way in which he has brought these kids in almost seamlessly, and still managing to get results.

Chriops

SHOULD The MoPo reach a top four position, I would say it is in the modern era tougher than us winning the old div one which we almost did twice or winning the FA Cup when it was THE biggest game in the world.

Succeeding in the good times is one thing but beating adversity is the measure of the man.

Warrens76



JAY RODRIGUEZ

Here's hoping Poch

THERE'S never a dull moment for Saints fans – and Mauricio Pochettino's first year at the helm has been no different, **writes LORELEI REDDIN.**

It was a 12 months that started and ended in controversy – but he's still here, which is more than can be said for some previous incarnations.

The initial reaction among most Saints fans was one of caution.

The Argentinian former Espanyol manager sounded an exciting prospect, but Nigel Adkins had been harshly sacked, having masterminded two successive promotions.

The end of the 12/13 Premier League season gave us some memorable moments at St Mary's with wins against the glamour sides Manchester City, Liverpool and Chelsea.

Our expectations rose,

only for home defeats to QPR and West Brom to prove there was still plenty of work to be done.

We got off to a flying start after the summer break, the fixture computer allowing us to dare to dream of being table toppers without the interference of any of the big guns, who would come later in the season.

And dare to dream we did. Having reached a high of third, we travelled to the

Emirates in November knowing a victory over Arsenal would put us top of the Premier League – if only for a day.

It wasn't to be and a tough run of fixtures since have been a reality check for fans who had started their European tour funds in earnest.

The 13/14 season has also seen three Saints players called up to the England squad for the first time

How Poch proved

A year on after one of the most emotional days of my years supporting Saints, I couldn't be happier.

I personally greeted Nigel Adkins' departure, a year ago, as bewildering, **writes PETER HOWARD.**

I instantly made a call to a fellow Saints fan, dialling the number with tears in my eyes, to moan and complain at just what on earth the club had done.

Adkins was starting to show his credentials as a Premier League manager.

There were still things that frustrated me, but he was our man and he could help us survive our first season back in the top flight.

The new man, Mauricio Pochettino, clearly doesn't have the attributes to keep Saints up, he doesn't have a clue about English football, I pondered.

But just how wrong could I be – I remember reading about Pochettino's pressing style, love of all out attack and his faith in young players.

I was excited.

Memories of Adkins were still lingering somewhere as I took my usual position in the Kingsland Stand for the 0-0 draw with Everton.

But by the time Saints had sunk Manchester City and Liverpool 3-1 and Chelsea 2-1, the pain of Adkins' departure was over.

I was a typical, fickle fan.

Come the end of the season, I still wasn't overly convinced by Poch.

The defence was more resilient but the goals had dried up nearing the end of the season.

Of course I am completely convinced by him now.

I get the feeling every aspect of Pochettino's management at the club is organised and done with precise and careful thought.

To me, because he hasn't spoken English in public, Poch is an enigma, a putting international man of mystery, possibly a spy.

An Argentine James Bond with a license to press and play possession football... you get the idea.

I also get the feeling he cares about English football and Saints.

It would be too easy to be a mercenary but he has put faith in a lot of academy products and seems committed to the project he and Nicola Cortese had at St Mary's up until the Italian's departure.

I get the feeling he's putting his heart and soul into the club and English football.

That is the impression he's giving off anyway.

The future is a curious one but a year on Saints are possibly in the best position they've ever been in.

Poch has undoubtedly taken Saints to the next level.

The next level for Poch is Europe.

His investment this summer will be hugely telling



to how far Saints want to go.

If Saints really do genuinely hold Champions League ambitions they need to strengthen in certain departments.

And, unlike Adkins, Poch's stature certainly has the weight to pull in the big names - Dani Osvaldo, Dejan Lovren and Victor Wanyama's signatures prove that – and I would like to think that, as well as developing home grown talent, he will also attract some more overseas stars.

The departure of Nicola Cortese this

week throws many things into doubt, not least Poch's future at the club.

Depending on the next moves by Katharina Liebherr, Poch could be off at the end of the season.

However, I suspect he wants to plough on with the aims he and Cortese set for the club – if he's allowed to do so with his character equally as persuasive as Cortese, if that's at all possible, who will negotiate ruthlessly in the transfer window, backed by Liebherr's money, then I suspect he will stay.

If the metaphorical financial rug is pulled from under him, and the club take a different turn towards selling, then Poch will go.

Peter Howard is a junior sports reporter on the Southern Daily Echo.



DAILY ECHO AND PINK - BEST FOR SAINTS NEWS

Saints Spotlight

can visit Wembley!

since the 1980s with Lambert, Lallana and Rodriguez all possibles for the plane to Rio.

For a man so reluctant to speak English, Pochettino is certainly a fan of English talent.

It has been a pleasure to see Shaw, Chambers and Ward-Prowse in action.

While the impressive Lovren and Wanyama have shored up the defence, it has been home-grown tal-

ent that has shone when compared to the big money signings of Osvaldo and Ramirez, who are yet to really make a mark.

Poch is not without his faults.

Devotion

His devotion to the chairman rather than our great club was a worry, but he stays for now.

His substitutions are not

always spot on and his attitude to the Capital One Cup was disappointing, particularly for those who travelled the 300 miles to Sunderland on a chilly Wednesday in November.

I'm hoping for better in the FA Cup.

With the luck of the draw, the likes of Lallana, Lambert, Fonte and Schneiderlin, instrumental in our last piece of silverware, could be heading back

down Wembley Way.

A top half finish is a reasonable aim and would cap off a successful season.

Despite recent upheaval, the future looks bright.

And, without the man who so disliked the stripes, perhaps even red AND white.

Lorelei Reddin is a lifelong Saints fan and the entertainment editor at the Southern Daily Echo.



LUKE SHAW

We have gone up a level

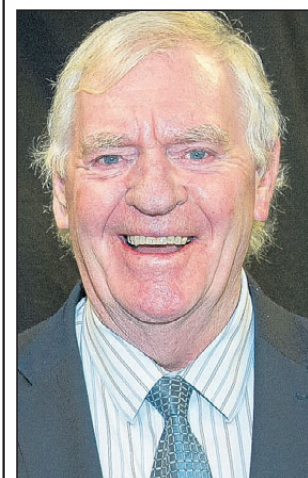
I WAS angry at the time when Adkins was given the shove, but that just goes to show the passion of a fan can be clouded with sentiment and not see the bigger picture.

Mauricio has taken us up a level and he has to be congratulated for that. The question in how he has done this year can also be answered by seeing him linked recently to the Spurs job. He has the respect of the wider premiership fraternity as well most of us.

Mush On The Beach

WITH Poch I sometimes think we lack an effective 'Plan B', but that may be down to personnel rather than anything else. If we don't get anyone in this window then the summer should see two or three out and two or three in and then next season we will really see plans come to fruition.

Cpt. Kirk's illegitimate love child



LAWRIE McMENEMY

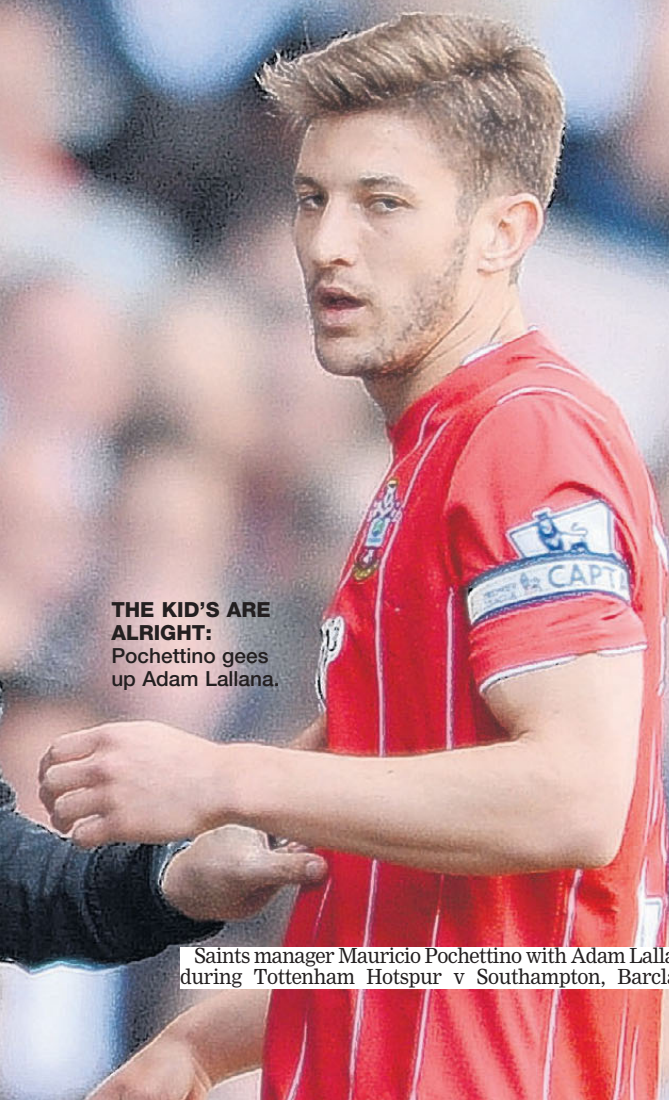
IT'S been superb. I haven't enjoyed watching Saints and nor taken as much pride in performances and supporting the team since the days of Lawrie Mac.

All players under his tutelage have improved and become better footballers – which augurs well for our academy players because ultimately success has to be self-sustaining.

Poch has taken us up a number of levels, and it's hard to predict how far we can go. Ok, the limits of a 32,000 ground will keep that in check – I don't want a team with players we can't afford who are financed by Leibher millions, like the Citys and Chelskis of this world – but with the academy, and players who seem to have bought into an ethos of the 'Southampton Way', some cup wins and European tours, with some brilliant football to watch en route, are very likely.

Tony in Liberia

me wrong



THE KID'S ARE ALRIGHT:
Pochettino gees up Adam Lallana.

Saints manager Mauricio Pochettino with Adam Lallana during Tottenham Hotspur v Southampton, Barclays

It's simply remarkable

EXCEPTIONAL is the only word for it. We go into the new year looking up the table in England's top league – something that, in the past 25 years, we can only say we've been able to do once before while Gordon Strachan was in charge.

However, Strachan's brand of football that year was light years away from what MP has delivered.

Add that to the chance he's given our young players and the fact he kept us up last season despite being under intense scrutiny and despite not knowing the language, is utterly remarkable.

Saint JD

BEST Saints manager I've known in my lifetime bar none. The potential of this side, with him at the helm, is sky high.

Fans need to be realistic about time scales, but I've no doubt he'll take us the Champions League.

St Retford

WHEN I heard our double promotion hero Nigel was sacked and to be replaced by a bloke from the Spanish League of whom I'd never even heard, I thought it was likely to be an awful mistake.

Clearly, with due respect to Nigel, the opposite was the case. MoPo has not only produced excellent results but also a style of play that is exciting and widely admired. I have no doubt too that our three players who have been capped by England since MoPo's arrival have similar thoughts.

marz19

I'M perfectly happy.

When NA was sacked I heard it in the snow on Southampton Common and I felt sick; it ruined the day and I thought we were doomed.

Then I watched as the way we play was transformed and fell for the new style. I also fell for the results.

Yes, there's been a hiccup over the past few weeks but the team's been crocked.

Not MP's fault – we just need a bit more strength in depth.

I LOVE the fact that he loves the academy and I suspect that'll always be the first port of call for team strengthening.

I was watching as we attacked WBA in the first thirty seconds of the game on Saturday, turned to Velleity Jr and we both rejoiced in the experience of watching the most entertaining football style I think I've ever seen.

Velleity

I WOULD say he is the best manager that I have seen here.

A big statement, however in the 20 years that I have been a fan, nobody has had us play with such passion and pride.

Every game you see us capable of something even when we look like there is no

chance.

Gordon Strachan is the only other Manager that has made us fitter and contending for the 90mins, but Pochettino has us up a level from that.

Tevez888



GORDON STRACHAN

MORE SAINTS NEWS IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Saints Spotlight

SAINTS' FIRST TEAM FIXTURES AND RESULTS 2013/14

		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
AUGUST															
Sat 17	West Brom(A)	W 1-0	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse***	Lallana*	Rodriguez**	Lambert 1	Ramirez*	S Davis**
Sat 24	Sunderland(H)	D 1-1	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte 1	Lovren	Shaw*	Wanyama	Schneiderlin**	W-Prowse	Lallana**	Rodriguez	Lambert	Clyne*	Oswaldo**
Tue 27	Barnsley (CCC 2) . . .(A)	W 5-1	K Davis	Clyne	Fonte	Yoshida	Fox	Cork	S Davis 2	Isgrrove*	Ramirez 1	Rodriguez** 1	Mayuka*** 1	Rowe*	Reed**
Sat 31	Norwich(A)	L 0-1	Boruc	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Fox	Wanyama	Schneiderlin**	W-Prowse	Oswaldo***	Lallana*	Lambert	Ramirez*	S Davis**
SEPTEMBER															
Sun 15	West Ham(H)	D 0-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw**	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Rodriguez	Oswaldo	Lallana*	Lambert	W-Prowse*	Chambers**
Sat 21	Liverpool(A)	W 1-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren 1	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	Rodriguez**	Oswaldo	Lallana**	Lambert*	S Davis*	W-Prowse**
Tues 24	Bristol City (CCC 3) (H)	W 2-0	K Davis	Chambers	Yoshida	Hooiveld 1	Fox	Cork	S Davis***	W-Prowse	Ramirez 1	Do Prado**	Lee*	Rodriguez*	Reed**
Sat 28	Crystal Palace(H)	W 2-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis*	Oswaldo 1	Lallana***	Lambert** 1	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez**
OCTOBER															
Sat 5	Swansea(H)	W 2-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Fox	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Oswaldo*	Lallana 1	Lambert	W-Prowse*	Rodriguez** 1
Sat 19	Man United(A)	D 1-1	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Lallana 1	Rodriguez*	Oswaldo	Lambert*	W-Prowse**
Sat 26	Fulham(H)	W 2-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez* 1	Lallana	Lambert 1	Do Prado*	Cork**
NOVEMBER															
Sat 2	Stoke(A)	D 1-1	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Rodriguez* 1	Lallana	Lambert	Ramirez*	S Davis**
Wed 6	Sunderland (CCC 4) . .(A)	L 1-2	K Davis	Chambers	Yoshida 1	Hooiveld	Fox	Cork	Reed	S Davis**	Ramirez***	Rodriguez	Lee*	W-Prowse*	Lallana**
Sat 9	Hull(H)	W 4-1	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama*	Schneiderlin 1	W-Prowse	Lallana*** 1	Rodriguez	Lambert** 1	S Davis*	Oswaldo**
Sat 23	Arsenal(A)	L 0-2	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Hooiveld	Shaw*	Wanyama	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse	Lallana**	Rodriguez	Lambert	S Davis*	Oswaldo**
DECEMBER															
Sun 1	Chelsea(A)	L 1-3	Boruc*	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama	Schneiderlin***	W-Prowse**	Lallana	Rodriguez 1	Oswaldo	Gazzaniga*	S Davis**
Wed 4	Aston Villa(H)	L 2-3	Gazzaniga	Clyne***	Yoshida	Lovren	Shaw	Wanyama**	Schneiderlin	W-Prowse*	Lallana	Rodriguez 1	Lambert	Oswaldo* 1	Cork**
Sat 7	Manchester City(H)	D 1-1	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Cork	S Davis***	W-Prowse	Lallana**	Rodriguez	Oswaldo* 1	Lambert*	Ramirez**
Sat 14	Newcastle(A)	D 1-1	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Hooiveld	Lovren	Shaw	Cork	S Davis	W-Prowse**	Rodriguez*** 1	Oswaldo*	Lambert	Lallana*	Schneiderlin**
Sat 21	Tottenham(H)	L 2-3	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Hooiveld	Lovren	Fox***	Cork*	Schneiderlin	S Davis**	Lallana 1	Rodriguez	Lambert 1	W-Prowse*	Ramirez**
Thu 26	Cardiff(A)	W 3-0	Gazzaniga	Chambers	Fonte	Yoshida	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Lallana *	Rodriguez 2 **	Lambert 1***	W-Prowse*	Ramirez**
Sun 29	Everton(A)	L 1-2	K Davis	Chambers***	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Cork*	S Davis	W-Prowse**	Lallana	Rodriguez	Lambert	Ramirez* 1	Gallagher**
JANUARY															
Wed 1	Chelsea(H)	L 0-3	K Davis	Chambers	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw*	Cork**	Schneiderlin	S Davis***	Lallana	Ramirez	Rodriguez	Clyne*	Lambert**
Sat 4	Burnley (FAC 3)(H)	W 4-3	K Davis	Clyne 1	Yoshida	Hooiveld***	Shaw	Cork	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Ramirez**	W-Prowse	Lambert* 1	Rodriguez* 1	Lallana** 1
Sat 11	West Brom(H)	W 1-0	Boruc	Clyne	Fonte	Lovren	Shaw	Cork*	Schneiderlin	S Davis	Lallana** 1	Rodriguez**	Lambert	Ramirez*	W-Prowse**
Sat 18	Sunderland(A)														
Sat 25	Yeovil (FAC 4)(H)														
Tue 28	Arsenal(H)														
FEBRUARY															
Sat 1	Fulham(A)														
Sat 8	Stoke(H)														
Tue 11	Hull(A)														
Sat 22	West Ham(A)														
MARCH															
Sat 1	Liverpool(H)														
Sat 8	Crystal Palace(A)														
Sat 15	Norwich(H)														
Sat 22	Tottenham(A)														
Sat 29	Newcastle(H)														
APRIL															
Sat 5	Manchester City(A)														
Sat 12	Cardiff(H)														
Sat 19	Aston Villa(A)														
Sat 26	Everton(H)														
MAY															
Sat 3	Swansea(A)														
Sun 11	Man United(H)														

	LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG		LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG		LA	LG	CA	CG	CSA	CSG
KELVIN DAVIS	2	0	4	0	290(1)	0	JACK CORK	7(5)	0	4	0	107(13)	0	RICKIE LAMBERT	17(4)	6	1	1	204(14)	110
PAULO GAZZANIGA	5(1)	0	0	0	16(1)	0	VICTOR WANYAMA	14	0	0	0	14	0	JAY RODRIGUEZ	18(2)	8	2(2)	2	45(15)	19
ARTUR BORUC	14	0	0	0	35	0	MORGAN SCHNEIDERLIN	17(1)	1	1	0	185(29)	9	DANI OSVALDO	9(4)	3	0	0	9(4)	3
NATHANIEL CLYNE	12(3)	0	2	1	48(3)	2	ADAM LALLANA	21(1)	5	0(2)	1	221(26)	56	TADANARI LEE	0	0	2	0	9(5)	2
CALUM CHAMBERS	9(1)	0	2	0	11(2)	0	STEVEN DAVIS	11(5)	1	4	2	38(16)	5	EMMANUEL MAYUKA	0	0	1	1	3(10)	1
DEJAN LOVREN	19	1	0	0	19	1	JAMES WARD-PROWSE	12(9)	0	2(1)	0	24(22)	1	BILLY SHARP	0	0	0	0	12(6)	10
JOSE FONTE	18(1)	1	1(1)	0	160(5)	13	JASON PUNCHEON	0	0	0	0	70(10)	10	SAM GALLAGHER	0(4)	0	0(1)	0	0(5)	0
JOS HOOIVELD	3	0	3	1	72(3)	9	LLOYD ISGROVE	0	0	1	0	1(1)	0	HARRISON REED	0(1)	0	1(2)	0	1(3)	0
MAYA YOSHIDA	2	0	4	1	39(1)	1	OMAR ROWE	0	0	0(2)	0	0(2)	0							
LUKE SHAW	18(1)	0	1	0	43(6)	0	JAKE SINCLAIR	0	0	0(1)	0	0(1)	0							
DANNY FOX	3	0	3	0	58(10)	1	GASTON RAMIREZ	1(9)	1	4	2	25(15)	8							
JACK STEPHENS	0	0	0	0	0(1)	0	GULY DO PRADO	0(4)	0	1	0	78(32)	22							

KEY: LA: league appearances. LG: league goals. CA: cup appearances. CG: cup goals. CSA: career Saints appearances. CSG: career Saints goals.

Non-league Action

EASTLEIGH MAKE IT SEVEN WINS IN ROW

Hards needs break

WINCHESTER City boss Neil Hards feels there would be a place for a winter break in the Sydenhams Premier Division while the weather continues to postpone matches.

Hards, whose team's match against Folland Sports was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch on Saturday, has been left frustrated with the disjointed nature of the Wessex at this point in time after another complete washout of fixtures.

"It leaves everyone a little bit frustrated doesn't it, I suppose most people will be at a loose end on a Saturday when the matches aren't on," he said.

"There would be scope for a winter break – unlike higher leagues that pull in massive crowds across the Christmas and New Year period at this level it doesn't change in fact there might be even less people at the matches."

"There could be an argument to start the season earlier and have a two or three week break across December and January, it could avoid some this frustration."

"The pitches are in a terribly churned up state at this point and all clubs are struggling to get their grounds in a good, playable condition – of course it would be up to the powers that be to decide any change."

The Wessex's table toppers won't be able to train on their pitch at the Deplan City Ground this week as they attempt to prepare it for when they welcome strugglers Downton Next Saturday in the Wessex.

"Everyone is in the same boat," said Hards. "We have to train around the edges of our pitch but I guess everyone will be doing the same thing," he added.

"The only positive you can take is that your injured players have time to mend and you don't lose them for any games."

EASTLEIGH kept up the pressure on Skril Conference South leaders Bromley was reeling off their seventh straight League and Cup victory this afternoon.

Hampshire neighbours Gosport Borough were the latest victims, beaten 2-1 at the Silverlake Stadium in front of a 668 crowd. Goals by Craig McAllister and Ben Strevens carried the Spitfires to victory against a Gosport side who have a tough fight ahead of them to stay in the League.

The Spitfires still minus the suspended Stuart Fleetwood, brought Damian Batt back and new signing Reece Connolly into the starting eleven.

Gosport named six ex-Eastleigh players in their line-up and another two on the bench.

Unsurprisingly it was Borough's ultra-competitive skipper Jamie Brown who conceded the first free kick against his old club – Jai Reason's curled delivery marginally too high for Craig McAllister at the back post.

Gosport competed well and, after Eastleigh goalkeeper Ross Flitney had intercepted well to prevent ex-Follands forward Rory Williams capitalising on Justin Bennett's through ball and hustled Spitfires left-back Michael Green into an error.

Bennett dispossessed him on the edge of the area, but Dean Beckwith got the Spitfires out of jail with a fine interception. Eastleigh had barely got out of first-gear when they snatched a ninth-minute lead.

Gosport's defence was badly exposed as Jamie Collins slipped the ball through to McALLISTER and, with the keeper Nathan Ashmore in no-mans-land, the big striker cruelly lobbed him.

McAllister then came within inches of a second, heading Green's corner narrowly wide.

Bennett was a lively outlet for Gosport and Beckwith's clumsy challenge on him earned the Eastleigh man a booking.

Eastleigh still weren't fully firing and were almost caught napping from a 22nd minute throw in. Danny Smith slipped the ball back to Williams, but his shot from the edge of the area flew straight at Flitney.

But the Spitfires had a very lucky escape two minutes later when ex-Pompey midfielder Sammy Igoe teed-up Smith whose dipping 20-yard strike was tipped onto the bar by Flitney at full stretch.

On 29 minutes Gosport got themselves into another defensive tangle as Eastleigh pressed, resulting in Reason latching onto Ashmore's weak clearance and lobbing over from 25-yards as the keeper frantically back-pedalled.

On 39 minutes Green chased to keep a long cross field pass in on the left but was dispossessed by the experience Igoe.

The Gosport man slipped the ball inside to Andy Forbes whose rushed clearance fell for Reason. The Eastleigh playmaker

whipped in a quick cross which was marginally too high for Connolly.

EASTLEIGH 1
GOSPORT 0

Eastleigh posed the first threat of the second-half as Batt played the ball inside for Reason to send a first-time shot just past Ashmore's left-hand post. With the Spitfires looking in vain for the linesman's flag, Smith played the ball over the top of the home defence for Williams but the ball ran behind for a goal-kick.

As a far more eventful second-half unfolded, Connolly set-up Reason whose shot rebounded off the inside of the post and then Brown incensed the home dugout with a wild challenge.

Annoyed at seemingly being muscled-off the ball by Ben Strevens, Brown exacted his revenge on Batt and got a ticking off and a booking.

With Gosport looking ever more stretched, Reason was odds on to score after a great run and cross by McAllister, but Ashmore threw himself bravely at the No. 10's feet to deny a certain goal. Just prior to that chance, Eastleigh had replaced Connolly with skipper Glen Southam.

And on 64 minutes Gosport added a double injection of pace, sending on Mike Gosney and Dan Woodward for Igoe and Adam Wilde.

The visitors were still looking lively with Smith volleying wide following a free-kick and Williams bursting behind the home defence but unable to get the ball across to Bennett. From showing signs of promise, Borough were caught by a sucker punch. They were undone down their right and McAllister played the ball on for STREVEN'S to fire across Ashmore into the far corner.

But Eastleigh's elation was quickly extinguished as Gosport pulled a goal back two minutes later.

Bennett delivered the ball into the area and this time there was confusion in the home defence, ending with substitute Dan WOODWARD scrambling the ball over the line.

Gosport's stomach for a fight unsettled Eastleigh at times and, on 81 minutes Williams closed down Flitney as he went to clear the ball and the ball rebounded behind and wide.

Woodward then headed a decent Bennett cross over before drama unfolded at the other end.

Ashmore came tearing outside his area but failed to win the ball. McAllister bore down on goal but Forbes denied him with a brave clearance at the foot of the post.

With the Borough goal now living a charmed life, McAllister (twice) and Reason should have killed the game off and the Spitfires had a big penalty shout turned down for Brown's feisty challenge on Strevens.



ON TARGET: Eastleigh on target against Gosport



Adam Rant



A LIEBHERR WHO



BEGINNING OF AN ERA: New Saints owner Markus Liebherr puts on a Saints scarf and waves to the crowd at the Ted Bates Trophy match between Saints and Ajax in 2009.

So why don't

SAINTS fans need to take a deep breath at the end of another turbulent week and give Katharina Liebherr their full support.

Some of the things that have been said and written about the woman who is now the club's non-executive chairman are embarrassing. There has been vitriol and thinly veiled slights at her that, quite frankly, are a little sickening given they have come from people who should know much better.

Those same people should reflect on this too and learn from it because some of what they have done over the past week has been woeful.

Unfortunately I have to include a few from Adam Rant's own journalistic profession in this. Normally the Ranty one stands up for his peers but a few have been downright unprofessional in the way they have reported the Saints saga.

Katharina Liebherr may have inherited the club from her father Markus, she may or may not care particularly for it, she may or may not have even the slightest interest in football. It does not really matter. She owns it.

Nicola Cortese has gone, he decided he couldn't work with a family representative on the board.

But let's not forget during the last suc-

cessful few years Katharina Liebherr has also owned the club. The success Saints have achieved has been under her watch.

To any reasonable person it doesn't sound like a massive ask – for you to have a representative on the board of a business that you own.

It was obviously one of several things that proved too much for Cortese, who had been used to doing things his own way.

That's his decision and his prerogative to take the ultimate action to leave if he is unhappy.

You have to say good on him in some ways if he felt that strongly about it that he was prepared to walk away. At least he showed the courage to do it.

From everything Adam Rant has heard since Cortese's departure it doesn't sound like Liebherr is here for a quick sale of the club.

Plus she and her advisors are presumably relatively astute in the world of business, what with their running other very wealthy companies. They know they need to protect the value of their asset and that instability would drive the cost down.

Future plans

Adam Rant has to say something here about the future of Saints, and it's an important point.

He got a very detailed briefing about Markus Liebherr's future plans when he took over at Saints – and was told in no uncertain terms that he didn't plan to own it forever.

Yes, that right. Even those close to the takeover when it happened were told that Markus was looking to sell eventually.

The purchase of the club was very much a mixture of business and pleasure for him – enjoy restoring the club to former glories, hopefully push them still further forward, and then sell at a healthy profit. His timescale, Adam Rant was told, was around ten years.

A sale would of course raise uncertainty, and it's reasonable that people may well fear such a thing, but let's not pretend it was never going to happen.

Besides which Katharina can do what she wants, and apparently she's not looking to sell at the moment anyway.

It's very hard to imagine that Markus's daughter is going to treat with disdain something which brought her late father such pleasure – and that's before you even think about the business element to all this.



A new contract for Pochettino?

MUCH of what Mauricio Pochettino said in his press conference this week was entirely sensible.

He obviously doesn't want to commit himself entirely until he has had time to figure out what the new person running the club is all about and what they intend going forward.

From Katharina Liebherr's point of view the best PR move she could make would be to get the new manager to sign a new contract. Even if it costs a hefty pay rise it's worth it as it adds an important air of stability to things.

Saints do not want to go through the remainder of this season with Pochettino constantly having to answer questions about his own future.

Also Pochettino's presence ensures the loyalty of the players. Some were fairly close to Nicola Cortese, but fears of some sort of exodus were always scaremongering tactics. Here we are a few days after he left and no transfer requests yet.

It's not impossible somebody could go at some point, but that's always the case in football.

The most important thing is to keep the manager and a new contract for him should be the top priority in the coming weeks.

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH SAINTS IN THE DAILY ECHO

This week's big talking points
with **Adam Leitch**

NEEDS SUPPORT

we give some to Katharina?



WOMAN AT THE HELM: Katharina Liebherr on a visit to St Mary's this week.

Love him or hate him...

THE REVISIONIST history of Nicola Cortese's time here summarises the kind of polar opposite views he always seems to attract.

Adam Rant has regularly decried the fact that any debate about Cortese, pictured right, is always portrayed as black and white – he's either been brilliant and had no faults whatsoever or has been ruining the club.

Read any fans comment section online and you can see it played out there.

The truth is far more balanced than that – even if that seems to upset both sides of the argument.

History only tends to record sketchy details.

The ones that will go with Cortese's name will be somebody hugely successful.

Markus saved the club and appointed Cortese full time and he guided them forward superbly, taking them from League One to the top flight.

With the money they spent they should have

done, but even so to get it done in such a time frame and progress as they have once in the top flight is very impressive indeed. Also on his record though is that he upset a lot of people and made a lot of enemies, which given his success with the club is actually fairly remarkable.

Let's keep in mind that he was only the chairman, not the manager or the players who are all still at the club and ready to move on without him, or even the person putting in the cash. He was being very handsomely rewarded for his services – money that, like any employee of Saints, came out of the club coffers. His loss is a shame but it's not even close to the end of the club.

He deserves plenty of credit for what he achieved but let's also keep things in perspective. A balanced view of life in general is very important, even if it is sometimes sadly lacking in football.



LATEST PREMIER LEAGUE STANDINGS – SEE BACK PAGE

Saints Spotlight

The Echo did not escape

Back at the start of 2010/11, Cortese said that no photographers – from local or national newspapers – would be allowed in to cover matches.

That led to one paper printing cartoons in place of match photographs, and the Bournemouth Echo printing photos from a match in the 1980s as they could not get pictures for the Saints v Cherries League Cup tie in August 2010.

The Southern Daily Echo was also on the receiving end of Cortese's ire. First banned for a few months midway through his first season at St Mary's, 2009/10, the Echo's photographers were not allowed in to attend games between October 2010 and September 2013.

Journalists were banned from the press box between March 2011 and September 2013.

At times, Cortese also banned the Echo from sending photographers to cover charity events being held at St Mary's – denying the charities the oxygen of publicity.

The Daily Echo never once kicked up a massive fuss, bringing the situation very much into the public eye.

Compare that with recent events at Newcastle United, where the club's decision to ban the local papers

ended with the matter being raised in Parliament!

Cortese also made the controversial move, back in the summer of 2012, to disperse with Saints' traditional red and white stripes following the club's return to the Premier League.

There was an outcry among fans when a virtual all-red pin-stripe shirt was unveiled instead, giving Saints the look of a mid 80s Liverpool side.

Another, predominantly all-red, shirt was then released for the current season.

Of course, most fans will look back on Cortese's time in charge fondly.

After all, it's the results that count most.

Would fans want a Saints team competing for the European places wearing an all-red top, or one battling to avoid relegation wearing stripes?

Saints' didn't wear stripes when they finished runners-up in the old First Division to Liverpool, and I haven't heard many fans complain about that.

And how many supporters would really bat an eyelid if Saints were top of the league with a few empty seats in the press box at St Mary's?



Saints stability

ANOTHER quiet week at St Mary's, then.

Hands up who thought Saints were now a template for clubs seeking stability?

I have to admit, it was starting to look that way.

A few years ago, the club lurched from one off-field controversy to another.

An unpopular chairman, Rupert Lowe, was ousted in a boardroom coup in the summer of 2006 – only for the man who replaced him, Michael Wilde, to fail to back up his financial promises.

Wilde didn't last long at St Mary's, and his executive directors were gone before Christmas 2007.

The following summer, Lowe and Wilde were back in charge, replacing the popular Nigel Pearson with a virtual unknown Dutchman.

Jan Poortvliet was totally out of his depth, though in fairness he was not helped by having a very inexperienced squad thrust on him.

(Even out of the nightmare 2008/09 campaign, though, there has come light – with the benefit of hindsight, that tough season gave valuable experience to the likes of Adam Lallana and Morgan Schneiderlin).

It wasn't until the summer of 2009, when Markus Liebherr and Nicola Cortese arrived, that Saints' fortunes started to turn for the better.

Fast forward to now and the club have been one of the success stories of the 2013/14 Premier League season.

An ambitious young-ish chairman and manager, a squad peppered with young English talent, a style of play that has won high praise – even Sunderland boss Gus Poyet said this week 'I don't think you can compare it (Saints' way of playing) with any other team in the world'.

That is high praise indeed from a Premier League manager, especial-

Controversy is back at St Mary's

Simon Carter

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SPORTS EDITOR



ly one who condemned Saints' style of play under Nigel Adkins in 2010/11 as not that different to Dagenham & Redbridge when he was in charge at Brighton.

Unsurprisingly – this being Saints, lest we forget – the path from bottom of the third division to the top half of the Premier League was not always smooth.

Alan Pardew and Nigel Adkins were ruthlessly axed at a time when they were popular figures with the fanbase.

'Ruthless'

Looking back now, surely no Saints fan can criticise the decisions – only the manner in which they were possibly done and the lack of any words from Cortese thanking them for their efforts in helping steer the club back from the brink towards the big time.

'Ruthless' is a good word to describe Cortese, and that is not meant as a criticism.

After all, surely everyone needs

an element of ruthlessness in their armour if they want to succeed in any world – let alone the business one.

Saints fan Daren Wheeler – who writes a weekly column in this very newspaper – told the Daily Echo earlier this week: "I don't want a media-friendly, cuddly chairman in charge of my club. I want one who is not afraid to make unpopular decisions."

There can't be many fans who would strongly disagree with those words.

Cortese is obviously a successful businessman, one who had done well prior to arriving at St Mary's as an unknown, only to leave in a blaze of publicity and his place in Saints' modern day history assured. No doubt he will do well again, wherever he goes.

(And, we should not forget at a moment like this, there are many fans who would love him to ride back into the corridors of power at Saints on the back of another takeover consortium).

He no doubt drove a hard bargain in business dealings – getting £12m

for Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain from Arsenal showed that.

There was also a lot to admire about his desire to tie most of Saints' better players to long-term deals.

Whether that was to reward them for their achievements, giving them some security, or to act as a 'hands-off' warning to bigger clubs sniffing around, who knows.

But not everyone would welcome Cortese back.

Saints legend Matt Le Tissier said this week that some supporters would have reacted to Cortese's departure by saying two words – 'good riddance'.

Le Tissier had some high profile spats with Cortese, stretching back to May 2010 when the latter hit out in a statement after Le Tissier had publicly backed then manager Pardew at a time when speculation was rife about his future.

Cortese's annoyance with Le Tissier went back to the previous summer, when the legend was involved in the Pinnacle consortium that was aiming to take over the club during its time in administration.

Bizarre

The Pinnacle deal eventually collapsed amid farcical scenes – remember Micky Fialka's bizarre appearance on Sky Sports? – allowing Markus Liebherr to complete a deal.

Cortese believed that Pinnacle's involvement on the scene prevented his good friend Liebherr from taking over a few weeks earlier.

In his eventful time at Saints – with the nature of the club's recent history, it was always going to be thus! – Cortese was certainly a Marmite character.

At times, it seemed he had a checklist of groups he wanted to annoy.

Club legends like Le Tissier and Francis Benali.

The Ex-Saints association.

The Saints Disabled Supporters Association. After first putting up prices for disabled fans, Cortese later decided to charge partially sighted and blind supporters for their season tickets.

Saints programme sellers, many of whom had worked for many years at The Dell and St Mary's. Also Andrew Murray, who after running the Saints programme shop for 30 years at both grounds was told he had to leave his match-day facility.



MEN IN THE CROWD: Nicola Cortese with former Saints owner Markus Liebherr, right.

WHAT THE FANS ARE SAYING - TURN TO PAGES 10 & 11

Saints Spotlight

is shattered!

Cortese is much loved – nearly

MATT Le Tissier made an interesting point this week when he said Cortese was close to being a much-loved chairman.

"If he had gone about his business in a different way he would have been a huge hero with everybody."

Cortese probably didn't care whether he was a 'huge hero' or not. He probably didn't care about his own popularity. Better to be a unpopular success in the top ten than a popular failure in the Championship.

Yet would it have been that difficult to have been a popular success?

It is not that easy a trick to pull off, obviously.

At Cardiff City, Vincent Tan provided the money to get the club in the Premier League, but angered most of the fans by changing the club's colours from blue to red.

At least Cortese didn't try changing Saints' from red to blue!



MATT LE TISSIER

Up at Hull, the owner there has caused an outcry by attempting to change the club's name from Hull City to Hull Tigers.

'City is too common a word,' he has suggested.

Cortese made a few unpopular moves at St Mary's, but he never tried to change the club's name to Southampton Saints.

Of course, Tan and Assem Allam own their clubs. Cortese did not own Saints, even though some of his actions probably forced some people to think he did.

That was what eventually led to his downfall.

He was only an employee in the same way as Alan Pardew and Nigel Adkins. He had to report to somebody above him.

Who knows if we will ever hear his name again.

Even if we don't, his name in Saints' history is assured.

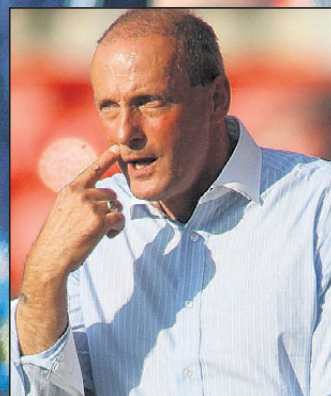
A divisive name, to be sure, but his name is there nonetheless.



OUSTED: Nigel Adkins



OUSTED: Nigel Pearson



OUSTED: Jan Poortvliet



OUSTED: Alan Pardew, pictured with Wally Downes

TODAY'S PREMIER LEAGUE RESULTS - SEE PAGE 48

Steve still feels thrill of FA Cup

FORMER Cherries star Steve Fletcher – whose late grandfather won the FA Cup – says he is saddened to see the famous competition being devalued.

Jack Howe's treasured medal from 1946 takes pride of place in the Fletcher family home in Hartlepool, the left-back helping Derby to a 4-1 win over Charlton at Wembley, a final also remembered for the ball bursting.

The FA Cup hit the headlines earlier this month when Aston Villa boss Paul Lambert said he felt it was an inconvenience to some Premier League managers, with Newcastle's Alan Pardew sympathising with his counterpart.

The magic of the Cup is still for the Dean Court legend, though.

Fletcher, a boyhood Liverpool supporter, can't wait for Cherries' fourth round meeting with the Merseyside giants next weekend.

The 41-year-old: "As a kid growing up supporting Liverpool in the 80s, winning the FA Cup was almost as big as winning the league title.

"The final was the biggest day in the sporting calendar and you would sit all day in front of the telly watching the coverage.

"Slowly but surely, and with all the money coming into the game, the competition has diminished. The priority now in every division seems to be with staying up and, the higher you go, the less important the FA Cup seems to become.

"It is sad that the greatest domestic cup competition in the world has been devalued and is nowhere near as important as it once was.

"I realise jobs are on the line and the vast riches in the game dictate that survival is the main aim for most clubs, especially in the top flight.

"The passion is still there with the supporters and, if you were to ask every player, particularly the English ones, I think they would say it means a lot to them."

Fletcher, who works on the scouting staff and in an ambassadorial role at Dean Court, added: "I don't know what the answer is. Some managers say it gets in the way of the league and I understand nobody wants to be playing 55 to 60 games a season.

"There are pros and cons for both sides of the argument and Wigan are a prime example.

"They won the cup last season and were relegated and I am sure there were mixed feelings about that.

"I just hate to see it devalued because some of my best memories as a player were in the FA Cup.

"I went to Derby recently and there is a photo in the main reception of my granddad walking round Wembley holding aloft the captain with the cup. Seeing that filled me with pride."



CHERRIES SPOTLIGHT ... CHERRIES SPOTLIGHT

SURMAN IS OUT TO STIFLE SUAREZ

ANDREW Surman is hoping to improve on his last outing against Liverpool – by helping AFC Bournemouth stop Luis Suarez.

The former Saints star is now a dad-of-two living back in Southampton during his season-long Cherries loan from Norwich City.

And thanks to the FA Cup win against Burton Albion on Tuesday night, he will soon get the chance to play against a top Premier League club again.

Suarez has scored an incredible 11 goals in his last four games against Norwich and Surman was in the Canaries side that lost 5-2 at home to Liverpool at the beginning of last season, when the Uruguayan scored a hat-trick.

Last month Suarez put another four past Surman's Norwich teammates at Anfield.

But midfielder Surman cannot wait for next week's big fourth-round tie.

"After a good result against Burton, which was always a potential banana skin, the lads are looking forward to Liverpool," he said.

"Everyone knows what Liverpool are about, they've had a really good start to the season and have some of the best players in the world.

"But it's important we don't show them too much respect. Before I got injured we lost 5-2 to them at Carrow Road last season, but we had a few chances in that game.

"And anything



can happen in a cup game."

Surman suffered medial collateral ligament damage shortly after his one previous appearance against Liverpool and was loaned out to Bournemouth for the duration of this season.

"The injury was frustrating, I did it in October/November 2012 and had lots of injections before a proper scan showed the ligament had come away from the bone," he said.

"I had an operation and was out for the rest of the season. Not having played much going into this season, and with £30m being spent by Norwich in the transfer window, I didn't think I'd get many opportunities to play this season," he said.

"So going to Bournemouth was a good opportunity to get games under my belt. I still feel I'm a Premiership player but the only way you can get full match fitness back is by playing games."

Southampton-born Surman made 146 appearances in five years for Saints before going to Wolves for £1.2m during the fire sale of 2009, a week before Markus Liebherr's takeover.

The circumstances at Bournemouth are also very different to Surman's five-month loan spell there seven years ago.

"Back then the players weren't getting paid and they were on the brink of administration, but it's changed now," he said.

"They've got a big financial backer and there's more structure to the club. Eddie Howe was still playing when I was last here and now he's taking things forward as manager."

SUAREZ



TODAY'S FOOTBALL RESULTS - SEE BACK PAGE

CHERRIES SPOTLIGHT ... CHERRIES SPOTLIGHT

JOB OFFER TOOK EDDIE BY SURPRISE

EDDIE Howe this week celebrated the fifth anniversary of his first being appointed permanent manager at Bournemouth.

Handed the Cherries management reins on a caretaker basis on New Year's Eve 2008, Howe made an inauspicious start by presiding over losses at Darlington and Rotherham.

And with Cherries 10 points adrift of safety in League Two and just 17 days of experience behind him, Howe was as surprised as anybody to be offered the job permanently on January 17 2009.

At 31, he became the youngest manager in the Football League and was tasked with arguably the hardest job in the country – keeping Cherries up.

Hamstrung by a points deduction, predecessor Jimmy Quinn, who had appointed Howe as the club's centre of excellence manager, had been shown the door after just 121 days.

"I always remember the New Year's Eve situation," said Howe.

"I was at a party, nothing too raucous, and took a phone call which rocked my world.

"I was enjoying my job in the centre of excellence and was quite happy with what I was doing.

"I immediately spoke to my wife – I think I may have sworn a few times – and said we had a decision to make.

"I told her that if I took the job, it would change our lives forever because she would never see me.

"I couldn't have been more accurate with that statement!

"I decided to give it a go.

"I thought the two defeats had been fatal to my chances of getting the job permanently and was almost looking forward to going back to the centre of excellence and getting out of the firing line.

"When Adam Murry phoned me to offer me the job on the way back from Rotherham, I thought he was joking.

"Things weren't looking good and I was very aware of the pressure on us.

"There wasn't a huge desire to take the job and the challenge but I felt I couldn't turn it down.

"In my view, it would have been cowardly and I would have been letting down the people who had showed so much faith in me.

"I wasn't sure I had enough experience to help keep the club up and I knew how important that was for everybody.

"It was future-defining to remain in the league. I don't take decisions like that lightly and I don't like letting down people.

"It was an incredibly tough decision to make."

Howe's first masterstroke was to re-sign club legend Steve Fletcher, the striker inspiring Cherries to a 3-1 triumph over table-toppers Wycombe on his debut.

Despite the victory, the gap remained at 10 points.

However, the win sparked a run of 13 games, which yielded eight wins and three draws, lifting Cherries seven points clear by the middle of March.

But four defeats in five reduced the deficit to one point ahead of a trip to second-bottom Chester.

Goals from Brett Pitman and Anton Robinson sealed a crucial win at the Deva Stadium before Fletcher took centre stage as the Greatest Escape was completed with a memorable home victory over Grimsby in front of 9,008 at Dean Court.

Howe said: "We dropped points in certain games and the doubt was always there.

"We weren't getting any closer to the teams above us and it looked bleak for us.

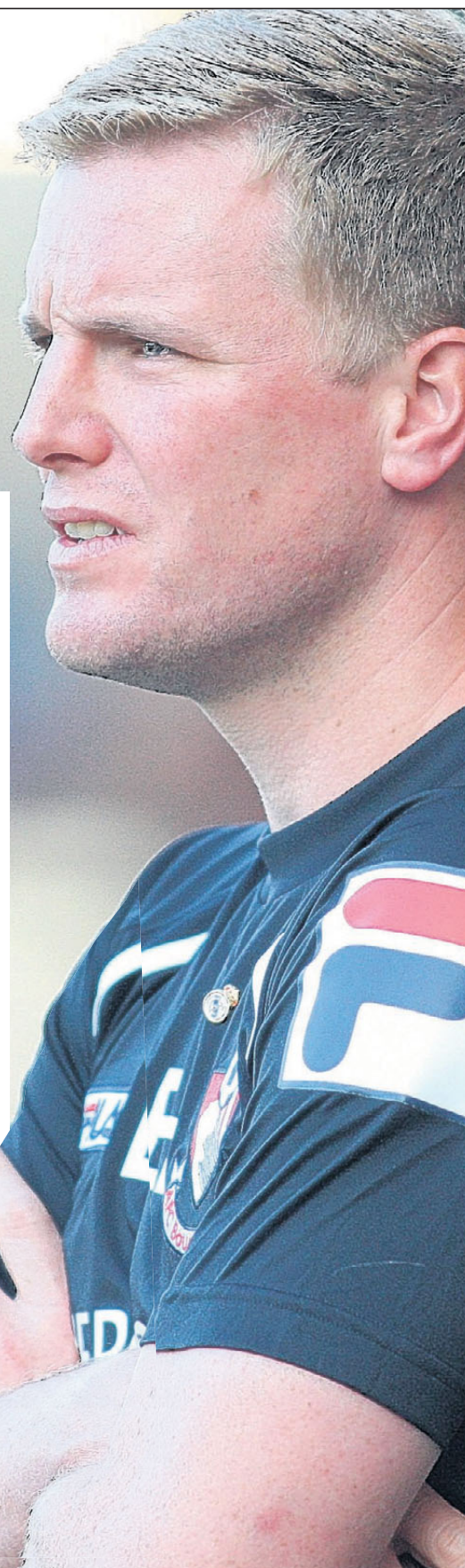
"From somewhere, a spirit and determination grew and I saw a new-found resolve and a real belief in the players.

"Steve Fletcher was the catalyst.

"His signing, his presence and leadership were key.

"I am not down-playing any of the other players and I would call them all heroes.

"They were magnificent and should be applauded and fondly remembered for what they did for the club in its darkest days."



Grabban gets vital goal for Cherries

LEWIS Grabban took centre stage as Cherries shared the spoils from a feisty showdown with Championship rivals Watford at Dean Court today.

Striker Grabban, who had looked set to complete a move to Brighton during the week, instead penned a new contract with Cherries ahead of kick-off.

Grabban, felled for a 62nd-minute penalty, put Cherries on level terms when he despatched the spot kick to cancel out Gabriele Angella's first-half headed opener.

Angella, who had netted twice when the Hornets had put six past Cherries in August, climbed highest to meet a Lewis McGugan free kick in first-half stoppage time.

However, the defender received a straight red card in the lead up to Cherries equalising in the second half, Angella sent off for hauling back Grabban.

Chances were few and far between in the early stages, a speculative drive from Matt Ritchie sailing over the crossbar midway through the first half.

Ritchie was then thwarted by Daniel Pudil's block, the winger taking aim after he had been teed up by a combination of Grabban and Surman, only to see his effort deflect over the crossbar.

Lee Camp had to be on his toes after Battocchio had let fly from distance, the Cherries goalkeeper getting down smartly at his near post to turn his deflected effort past the upright.

Pugh fluffed his lines after he had been put through by Surman's slide-rule pass, the winger, who appeared slightly off balance, screwing his shot into the Steve Fletcher Stand.

Watford opened the scoring in first-half stoppage time when defender Angella outjumped the Cherries defence to guide a header past Camp after meeting McGugan's free-kick.

Charlie Daniels worked an opening following a neat one-two with Surman early in the second half, although the defender's resultant shot was charged down.

Cherries levelled from the spot when Grabban, who had been felled for the penalty, sent Almunia the wrong way to register his 11th goal of the campaign.

And to compound Watford's misery, defender Angella, the man deemed to have committed the foul, was sent packing after receiving a straight red card.

Although Cherries were awarded a second penalty when Pugh was sent sprawling, Grabban's 72nd-minute spot-kick was beaten away by Almunia.

And the Spanish goalkeeper also performed heroics to keep out Eunan O'Kane's effort after the midfielder had blasted a long-range drive through a crowd of players.

A miraculous saving block by Pudil denied Ritchie a late winner, while substitute Brett Pitman saw his rasping effort just clear the crossbar before a Daniels header went wide at the death.



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Saints Spotlight

GARY Johnson will be aiming to write another chapter in his sensational Yeovil Town story next weekend at St Mary's.

Now in his second spell at the Somerset club, Johnson has guided the Glovers from non league football to the second tier of English football.

About the only thing he hasn't done yet is to claim a Premier League scalp in the FA Cup - so Saints have been warned.

In his first spell, Johnson achieved Yeovil's long-held ambition of winning promotion to the Football League, winning the Conference in 2002/03 just 12 months after he had led them to the FA Trophy, non league's premier cup.

Johnson was not content with that, though.

Two seasons later he oversaw Yeovil's promotion from League 2, before leaving to take over at Bristol City.

At Ashton Gate, he was a big success too - winning promotion from League 1 in his first full season, 2007/08, and reaching the Championship play-off final 12 months later.

With Bristol City currently engaged in a battle to avoid relegation to the fourth tier for the first time since 1984, it is easy to forget that almost five years ago they were 90 minutes from the Premier League.

Despite unhappy spells at Peterborough and Northampton, Johnson was a popular appointment among Yeovil fans when he returned to Huish Park in January 2012.

At the time the club were in the League 1 drop zone, two points adrift of safety with a worse goal difference than the fifth bottom club as well.

Within 16 amazing months, he had taken them into the Championship - just ten years after leading Yeovil into the Football League.

With ten wins in the club's last 25 games of 2011/12, he masterminded their climb to safety.

Then, writing one of the most remarkable stories of modern times in the process, Johnson took the unfashionable club into the League 1 play-offs last season.

They scored a late winner in the second leg to beat former Premier League Leaguers Sheffield United and book a Wembley date against Brentford.

There, Irish striker Paddy Madden scored his 23rd goal of the season to help the Somerset club win 2-1 to scale previously undreamed of heights.

Yeovil in the second tier. No-one could ever have envisaged that, surely?

I certainly didn't when I moved to Yeovil in the summer of 1988, newly qualified as a journalist and ready for my first ever full-time job in the big, wide world.

Back then, 26 years ago now, the Glovers were still celebrating another promotion. That was the one which saw them clinch the Vauxhall Opel League title - the equivalent of what is now the Conference South division that Eastleigh, Gosport Borough and Havant & Waterlooville play in.

Yes, that was the level Yeovil had been playing at when I moved to the town.

Of course, they were a famous non league club at the time, despite the standard they had dropped to.

An FA Cup giant-killer of some renown, their 1949 slaying of a Sunderland side containing the legendary Len Shackleton remains one of the few occasions of a non league

JOHNSON ON CUP GLORY TRAIL

PAIR OF GLOVERS: Boss Gary Johnson, below, and veteran striker James Hayter



club ever beating a top flight one in the tournament.

During the five years I lived in Yeovil, I saw them beat Hereford away in the last minute of a replay to book a third round home tie with Arsenal.

Ian Wright scored a hat-trick in the Gunners' 3-1 win at a packed Huish Park, Tony Adams afterwards mistaking me for a fan by taking my journalists' notebook and scribbling his

autograph.

The following season, 1993/94, I was there when Yeovil scored another late winner to claim another Football League scalp, Fulham.

Those were all great Cup nights, when the Glovers loved living up their giant-killing pedigree.

Now, of course, they didn't have to win several matches to reach the third round - they qualified by rights due to their league position. Yeovil will roll up for their fourth round tie at Saints next weekend aiming to

reach the last 16 for the first time since they topped Sunderland all those years ago.

A first ever cup tie against

Mauricio Pochettino's club was the reward for a 4-0 third round win against League 1 high-fliers Leyton Orient.

Though they are down amongst the Championship's relegation zone, Johnson's side showed they were a class above an O's team who were only four places below them in the football pyramid. Veteran James Hayter - the man who scored over 100 league and cup goals for Cherries - netted twice, after only previously scoring once all season.

Yeovil have been frequent users of the loan system in recent years, and Johnson used three against Orient.

Everton duo Shane Duffy, 22, and John Lundstram, 19, lined up in defence while Liverpool forward Adam Morgan, 19, came on as a second half sub.

Yeovil's season of 'nearlies'

YEovil Town's historic first season at Championship level has been a steep learning curve for a club who were in non-league football just eleven years ago, writes **MARTIN MCCONACHIE**.

Going into this weekend's game at Birmingham, the Glovers were second bottom, five points from safety.

But it has definitely been a campaign of "what ifs" as nine of our defeats this season have been by a single goal.

There has been the occasional beating, of course, with the Christmas losses to Huddersfield 5-1 and Bournemouth 3-0 particular low points.

Generally, Gary Johnson's men have been competitive in most games without picking up the rewards they deserved.

Best not mention some very contentious penalties awarded against them, either!

Root cause of the issue has been goals, or more accurately the lack of them.

Top scorers this season are midfielder Ed Upson (4 goals), defender Byron Webster (3 goals) and striker Ishmael Miller (3 goals).

The latter was a loanee that has now returned to parent club Nottingham Forest.

Kieffer Moore, a raw talent plucked from Dorchester Town in the summer, has struck two in two sub appearances and may well be rewarded with a start against Saints.

It's difficult to know where Johnson stands with regards to the forthcoming tie at St Mary's. Yeovil had an almost unprecedented record as a non-league outfit in the FA Cup and there is immense pride that such a tiny club has made it to the fourth round for only the third time in our history.

But survival in the Championship is clearly our raison d'être for us to ensure this second tier season isn't a one off.

The squad isn't a huge one so rotation of players would be relative. Against Leyton Orient in the third round, the only changes to the team were forced.

I'd expect a very similar team to that which turns out each week in the Championship.

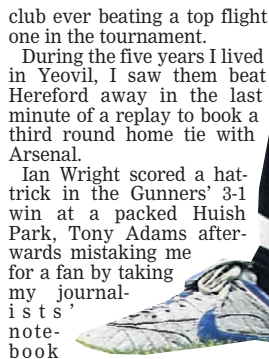
The season has had its bright points, of course, with the likes of Luke Ayling, Byron Webster, Joe Edwards and Joel Grant adapting well to life a step below the Premier League.

Victories, although few, have been savoured - especially thumping Watford 3-0 at Vicarage Road and beating Nottingham Forest 3-1 at home.

Yes, it will take a massive upset to beat the Saints on their own turf.

But if Mauricio Pochettino's men under-estimate their plucky opposition, you never know. This is Yeovil Town, after all!

Martin McConachie is a lifelong Yeovil fan who has recently written a book charting the club's remarkable first 10 years in the Football League.



and scribbling his

autograph.

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Premiership Spotlight



GROWTH OF FOREIGN BOSSES GOES ON



OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJAER

FOR the first time ever, half the managers in the English Premier League are now foreign.

The appointment of Spaniard Pepe Mel ahead of West Bromwich Albion's defeat at Saints last weekend was the third successive overseas appointment in the top flight, writes **SIMON CARTER**.

Rene Meulensteen took over at Fulham before Christmas while Ole Gunnar Solskjaer was Cardiff's choice to replace Malky Mackay earlier this month.

Now Mel becomes the tenth foreigner in charge.

"I disagree with so many foreign coaches in this country," said a high profile manager at the beginning of this month.

"It's because I don't see a reason for that ... I don't feel the English managers are in any point behind the foreign ones."

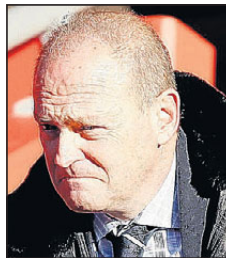
Those comments weren't made by an English person, as you might think.

They were made by Jose Mourinho, one of the ten foreign bosses.

"I have to say the managers that

PREMIER LEAGUE FOREIGN BOSSES

Arsene Wenger (Arsenal)	French
Ole Gunnar Solskjaer (Cardiff)	Norwegian
Jose Mourinho (Chelsea)	Portuguese
Roberto Martinez (Everton)	Spanish
Rene Meulensteen (Fulham)	Dutch
Manuel Pellegrini (Man City)	Chilean
Mauricio Pochettino (Saints)	Argentine
Gus Poyet (Sunderland)	Uruguayan
Michael Laudrup (Swansea)	Danish
Pepe Mel (West Brom)	Spanish



PEPE MEL

are coming here are good," the Chelsea manager added.

"So I'm not saying the people here are not top people, or that they doesn't deserve to be here."

"I just feel sorry that in a football country like England managers are not getting enough jobs in this country."

"The main culture has to be always British."

Mourinho is right.

The decisions taken by Cardiff and West Brom are gambles, as neither of their new managers

have any experience of managing in the English top flight.

West Brom's appointment of Mel echoes Saints' own decision to bring in Pochettino almost a year ago.

When Pochettino arrived, Saints were 15th in the Premier League, three points above the drop zone.

They replaced a manager with Premier League experience with one sacked by a Spanish club a few months earlier.

Mel arrives at The Hawthorns with the Baggies 14th and four

points clear of the bottom three. They have replaced a manager with Premier League experience with one sacked by a Spanish club a few weeks earlier.

History has shown that Nicola Cortese's gamble has paid off, with Pochettino keeping Saints up and progressing the team this season.

We will wait and see if Mel can have the same impact in the west Midlands as Pochettino has on the south coast.

One thing is for sure, it cannot be healthy for the English national team to have half the Premier League managers coming from abroad.

It is not something replicated in other major European countries.

There are only seven non-German managers in the 18-team Bundesliga, six non-Spanish bosses in La Liga (out of 20) and only four non-Italian managers out of 20 in Serie A.

In contrast, there are only five English-born managers in the Premier League - Chris Hughton, Steve Bruce, Alan Pardew, Tim Sherwood and Sam Allardyce (and who knows how long Big Sam will last!)

OVERSEAS MANAGERIAL FLOPS IN THE PREMIER LEAGUE

Egil Olsen

Was manager of Wimbledon when the Dons' great life in the top flight of English football came to an end in 1999/2000.

Olsen had taken Norway to take successive World Cups - in 1994 and 1998 - prior to arriving in London for his first taste of English football.

Was re-appointed Norway boss in 2009, a post he resigned in September of last year.

Juande Ramos

Tottenham were in the relegation zone when he arrived in October 2007 after resigning his post at Spanish club Sevilla.

Ramos guided the club away from danger, but then endured an even worse start to the 2008/09 campaign.

With Spurs bottom of the league with two points from eight games, Ramos was sacked a day before he was due to 'celebrate' exactly a year in charge.

Ramos subsequently managed Real Madrid in 2008/09, a spell which included a humiliating 6-2 home loss to Barcelona.

He then moved to CSKA Moscow and since 2010 has been managing another Russian club, Dnipro Dnipropetrovsk.

Jacques Santini

The Frenchman left his job as manager of the French national team after Euro 2004 to take over at Tottenham.

But after just 13 games in charge at White Hart Lane, he resigned due to personal problems.

At the time it was widely reported that a series of disagreements with then Sporting Director Frank Arnesen had led to his departure.

Avram Grant

Was manager at both Portsmouth and West Ham when those two clubs went down from the Premier League in 2010 and 2011 respectively.

His first job in England had come in September 2007 when he replaced Jose Mourinho at Chelsea.

He had previously left Portsmouth to take over the role of director of football at Stamford Bridge.

Despite leading the Blues to the Champions League final, his contract was terminated at the end of the season.

He returned to Fratton Park in October 2009 as director of football, and was made first team manager the following month.

Ossie Ardiles

The former Tottenham star had just guided WBA to promotion from League 1 when he returned to White Hart Lane amid a fanfare of publicity in the summer of 1993.

Spurs could only finish 15th in the second Premier League season, and in October 1994 Ardiles was sacked.

He had made some high profile signings, including Jürgen Klinsmann, but his attack-minded sides too often left themselves wide open in defence.

Christian Gross

Another foreign manager to have experienced troubled times at Tottenham.

Appointed Gerry Francis' successor in November 1997, Gross oversaw a dismal 6-1 home loss to Chelsea before being sacked three games into the 1998/99 campaign.

CHECK UP ON ADAM RANT - PAGES 14 & 15

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Pressure's off Arnold

ADIE Arnold believes his Verwood Town side can breathe easily again after last Saturday's 2-1 home win over Folland Sports in the Sydenhams Premier Division.

Despite having goalkeeper Chris Lynch sent off with six minutes to go for hauling down Planemakers' sub Mike Turvey, the Potters held strong for a 2-1 win after Ryan Long had halved Follands' arrears from the spot.

A Jack Lovell brace had put Verwood in the driving seat and, having watched his side open an 11-point gap on the bottom two, Arnold said: "That sees us



JACK LOVELL

safe now. I'm confident the other teams down there will not catch us. "We're out of the bottom group and, hopefully, with the pressure

off we can push on and get some results."

Arnold, meanwhile, lauded the loyalty of his Verwood rookies after top scorer Lovell turned down an approach from former club Christchurch.

Striker Lovell, who came up through the Christchurch youth ranks, has netted five times for the Potters this season.

Arnold said: "We are over the moon about Jack staying."

"He is happy here, knows he is a valuable member of the squad and is the sort of player we have to look to build a side around."

"Loyalty works both ways. Like many other players, we gave Jack the chance to prove himself at Wessex League level on a regular basis and he has repaid our belief in him."

"We have had three or four approaches for players this season and the majority have stayed put."

Simon Carter

simon.carter@dailyecho.co.uk

SPORTS EDITOR

EASTLEIGH must beat a defence with one of the best records in Europe if they are to pull off a major FA Trophy upset next month.

The Spitfires host former Football League Cambridge United on February 1 with a place in the last four of non league football's premier cup competition up for grabs.

Richard Hill's Conference South high fliers booked their quarter final spot – for the first time in the club's history – with a last-gasp 3-2 home win over divisional rivals Dover last weekend.

Cambridge, second in the Conference Premier, joined them in the last eight by travelling to the only club above them in their league, Luton, and winning a third round replay 1-0 at Kenilworth Road on Tuesday.

The U's, managed by former Luton boss Richard Money, became the first Conference club to win at the Bedfordshire club all season thanks to a goal from new signing Ashley Chambers.

The striker is a thorn in the side of Luton, having plundered the equaliser on his debut last weekend after coming on as a sub as Cambridge fought back from 0-2 down to earn their replay.

Memorable

Chambers only joined Cambridge from York last week, where his most memorable goal for the Minstermen was against Luton in the 2012 Conference Premier play-off final at Wembley.

While Chambers grabbed the headlines for his match winner in midweek, United were keeping a clean sheet.

The club have one a phenomenal defensive record this season, with loanee Chris Maxwell having only conceded 10 goals in his 24 Conference outings this season.

Along the way, the 23-year-old has kept an amazing 16 clean sheets and conceded just one goal on another six occasions.

In just two out of the 24 games has he conceded two goals.

Maxwell returned to parent club Fleetwood Town earlier this month, forcing Cambridge to bring in Pompey keeper John Sullivan on loan until the end of the season.

Sullivan made his debut against Luton last Saturday and again played in midweek.

Eastleigh fans will be familiar with Hampshire rivals Gosport and Havant, who are also through to the last eight of the Trophy.

Here, the Sports Pink looks at the remaining quarter finalists ..

Aldershot Town

The north Hampshire club pos-

TOUGH ON



THE BEST DEFENCES IN EUROPE

	PI	GC	Av
Glasgow Rangers	20	8	0.40
CAMBRIDGE UTD	24	10	0.42
Roma	19	10	0.53
Ath Madrid	19	11	0.58
Glasgow Celtic	20	12	0.60
QPR	25	15	0.60
Sp Lisbon	15	9	0.60
Barcelona	19	12	0.63
Juventus	19	12	0.63
Monaco	20	14	0.70
Paris SG	20	14	0.70
Hamilton Ac	20	14	0.70
Wolves	26	19	0.73
Porto	15	11	0.73
EASTLEIGH	19	14	0.74
Burnley	25	19	0.76
Chorley	25	19	0.76
Hemel Hemp	25	19	0.76

GC = goals conceded. Av = average goals conceded per game.

sess a striker well known to Eastleigh fans.

Southampton-born Williams was a hit at the Silverlake Stadium prior to joining Reading in the summer of 2010.

With the Royals subsequently winning promotion to the Premier League, the 26-year-old was never required for a competitive match.

He spent loan periods at Northampton and Rotherham before

released last summer. Williams gained a new lease of life after moving to an

Aldershot side still rebuilding after relegation from League 2.

He is currently the Conference Premier's leading marksman with 16 goals in 25 starts.

He has eight in his last six games, including a hat-trick in a 5-1 win against Southport and two more in a 6-0 victory over Tamworth.



MATT PATERSON

McALLISTER HUNGRY FOR MORE WITH EASTLEIGH - PAGES 24/25

Non-league Football



SPITFIRES



SPITFIRES' DELIGHT: Jai Reason, left, celebrates scoring the first goal against Dover.

Another striker at The Recreation Ground is ex-Saint Matt Paterson, left. He remains best remembered at St Mary's for his red card against Manchester United in an FA Cup tie in January 2009.

Paterson did also score the first league goal in Saints' 2009/10 League 1 campaign at home to Millwall on the opening day. After spells at Southend and Burton, Paterson moved to Aldershot last summer and has so far scored two league goals in 11 starts plus 12 more off the bench.

Someone with a better strike rate is 20-year-old

Millwall loan striker Aiden O'Brien.

He has three goals in five league outings for the Shots, and was also on target in the 3-0 Trophy win against Guiseley last weekend.

Aldershot are currently one place above the four-team relegation zone, though they did start the season on minus ten points after going into administration.

Only leaders Luton and Halifax have scored more goals at home than the Shots' 32, though.

Grimsby Town

Yet again, the Mariners are challenging for a place in the Conference Premier play-

Newport County.

It was a case of what might have been in 2012/13 as the club were also beaten on penalties in the FA Trophy final by Wrexham.

Grimsby, a Championship club just over a decade ago, recently went close to causing a big FA Cup shock against Huddersfield Town.

The Mariners were leading their three divisions higher visitors 2-1 with four minutes left of their third round tie.

Martin Paterson then equalised before Grimsby defender Aswad Thomas put through his own goal in the dying seconds.

Grimsby won through to the quarter finals of the Trophy after beating Eastleigh's divisional rivals Maidenhead 2-1 at Blundell Park.

Town boss Paul Hurst knows Eastleigh are a dark horse in the Trophy this season.

Prior to last weekend, he said: "Eastleigh are still in it - they have a really good chance of promotion and have spent a lot of money assembling a squad to get promoted."

"But realistically, everyone will look at us and think we're real contenders."



Tamworth

Former Saints defender Wayne Thomas, inset left, has been a regular in the Lambs' defence this season.

He has played 18 Conference Premier games and scored one goal - the winner on his debut at Salisbury City last August.

Thomas, 34, was one of the goalscorers in the shoot-out when Tamworth beat Northern Premier League high-fliers Chorley on penalties in Tuesday's third round replay.

Other well known names in the Tamworth side included former Northern Ireland international defender Tony Capaldi and ex-Aston Villa, Millwall and Gillingham striker Darren Byfield.

Goals have been a problem for the Staffordshire club this season, with 20-year-old Richard Peniket top scorer with just four.

That fact goes some way towards explaining their current position in the Conference Premier relegation zone, though they are two points adrift of fifth bottom Aldershot with two games in hand.

North Ferriby

The Yorkshire club have done remarkably well given that the population of the town is under 4,000.

The Conference North club caused the upset of the last 16 with a 4-0 romp at former Football League club and Conference Premier outfit Lincoln City.

Ferriby are currently two points clear top of their league, with two games in hand on second placed Hednesford.

Non-league News

Woes ease for Whites

A QUIET January has seen no new faces join or depart Salisbury City at the midway point of the transfer window.

Whites boss Mikey Harris sees no need for change at a time when key players are making their return from the sidelines.

"Nothing's going on at the minute," said Harris earlier this week.

"We've got some exciting, strong and attacking players coming back from injury and I'm confident in the group I have."

Robbie Sinclair and Elliott Frear returned as substitutes at

Aggborough last Saturday, where Salisbury went down 3-0 to Kidderminster Harriers in the Skril Conference Premier.

Ex-Saints striker Jamie White

also got a run-out off the bench, while Dan Fitchett is nearing full fitness and is back in training with Brian Dutton, who has been troubled by an Achilles problem.

Harris opted to face Kidderminster with the same squad that had beaten Edgar Davids' Barnet on December 28.

But they were well beaten on the day and, with more players now available, a few alterations could be in order.

"I've quite a few options now," said Harris.

"I wanted to give the team a chance to replicate their recent wins, which I thought was fully deserved."

"But some of the players didn't take that opportunity and that's something I'll be addressing."

Kidderminster's now departed hero Joe Lolley single-handedly condemned Salisbury to their seventh away defeat with a first-half strike and two penalties late on.

Lolley, 21, signed for Huddersfield Town this week - but not before leaving Kiddy the parting gift of an FA Cup winner against Peterborough.



DAN FITCHETT



Non-league Football

Eastleigh 2013/14

Conference South

August

17 Sutton (H)W1-0
Odubade
20 Bath City (A)W1-0
Stevens
24 Basingstoke (A)L0-2
26 Havant and W (H) ...D 0-0
31 Boreham Wood (A) ...W 3-0
McAllister, Fleetwood, Reason

September

7 Bromley (H)W 2-1
McAllister, Fleetwood
14 Maidenhead (A) ...W 3-1
Odubade 2, McAllister
17 Eastbourne (H)W 2-0
Reason, Southam
21 Hayes and Y (H)W 1-0
McAllister

October

5 Concord (H)D 1-1
Reason
8 Ebbsfleet (A)L 1-3
Fleetwood
19 Staines (H)W 1-0
Reason

November

2 Sutton (A)D 1-1
McAllister
9 Farnborough (H)W 1-0
McAllister
12 Gosport (A)W 2-0
Odubade, Southam
23 Tonbridge (H)L 1-2
Collins

December

17 Dover (A)W 2-1
Stevens, Fleetwood
26 Dorchester Town (A) W 2-1
Stevens, Reason
28 Bath City (H)W 2-1
Stevens, Collins

January

14 Dover Ath (A)W 2-1
Stevens, Fleetwood
18 Gosport Borough(H)
21 Weston-super-Mare ... (A)
25 Ebbsfleet United(H)
28 Bromley(A)

February

1 Whitehawk(A)
8 Maidenhead United(H)
15 Tonbridge Angels(A)
18 Bishops Stortford(A)
22 Farnborough(A)
25 Chelmsford(H)

March

1 Weston-super-Mare(H)
8 Concord Rangers(A)
15 Bishop's Stortford(H)
22 Staines Town(A)
29 Hayes and Yeading U ... (A)

April

5 Whitehawk(H)
12 Chelmsford City(A)
19 Basingstoke Town(H)
21 Havant and W(A)
26 Boreham Wood(H)

TBA: Dorchester(H)

BIG MAC HUNGRY FOR

PRIOR to the start of this vital season for Eastleigh FC, Craig McAllister was clear in his mind about where responsibility lies if the club is to make good on its ambition to progress towards the Football League.

"There's a lot been happening behind the scenes, and you can see how everything is coming on. People are working hard to try and get things off the field right. The biggest thing is getting it right on the field. You can do so much off the field, but you have to get it right on the pitch. If we do that other things can take control of themselves."

Sitting poised on the shoulder of Conference South leaders Bromley, and with a prestigious FA Trophy quarter-final tie against Cambridge United at their own Silverlake Stadium in the offing, the popular centre-forward is satisfied with his team's work so far, **writes PAUL MCNAMARA.**

"We've certainly improved from last year. The expectation was always to do well and to try and win promotion. At the moment we're on course for that, so from that point of view it's been a successful first half of the season."

The lone frustration for McAllister has been the succession of minor injuries that

'The pressure comes from wanting a new contract. You need to provide for your family'

have prevented him truly hitting his stride in what is personally, as well as for his club, a huge campaign.

"It has been stop and start for me. I've been getting back and then had to sit out a while again. Now we've had games being called off because of the weather. It would just be nice to get a run of games again. When I did have that I was scoring a few goals and everything was going well. But, there are a lot of games to go and I know that run will come again. The frustration of having one or two niggles is all behind me now."

At 33 years-old, and with eight former employers – as well as five temporary stays elsewhere – McAllister is desperate to prolong his time at the place where it all began for him back in 2001. That desire is deepened by the fact that he has purchased a home, where he is settled with his fiancée and their two children, close to his place of work.

"The pressure comes from wanting a new contract. You need to provide for your family, like any man does. I just know that I need to keep performing and one way or another it will be sorted. It's difficult for me to say whether I'll get it or not. It depends on how well I do in the coming four or five months."

McAllister's second child, Charlie, was born in the early hours of Saturday,



STRONGMAN: Craig McAllister, centre, in action for Eastleigh and, inset, celebrating after scoring his team's

November 30, which just happened to be the date on which Eastleigh were continuing on their FA Trophy trail away at Bury Town. The new father to be was one of the Spitfires number staying overnight in a hotel ahead of the first-round tie in East Anglia, when news came through that the baby was on its way. Despite his manager, Richard Hill, pictured right, offering to drive the player back to Southampton, he opted to remain with the squad.

"I had a bit of stick off one or two people about that, but I discussed it with the missus before I left and at the time she wasn't going

into labour. She didn't think she'd be having the baby then. She knows this is my job. Once I was there she just said 'Get on with it, it's your career. You need to be there'. That was it. There wasn't a great deal to think about."

The uber-professional targetman scored the final goal in his side's 3-0 win at Bury's characterful Ram Meadow ground, but not before he'd started the match on bench duty.

"I wasn't overly impressed, but I never am when I'm on the bench. You've just got to get on with it haven't you. I came on and scored a goal which helped us get through that round."

After being overlooked for a

starting berth during recent stages, McAllister's resolute attitude towards the front of his manager's a recurring theme, now where since his June battery of attacking goals but throughout a carefree forward. Manager enough goal-scorers.

"I look at it as a special for me because I toes, as all the lads healthy at any club."

"You do think it might come, or 'the another striker' but football. Competition best out of me person

NON-LEAGUE STORY TO TELL? CALL WENDY GEE ON 023

Non-league Football

MORE WITH EASTLEIGH

Non-league News

Bowers won't give up on Taylor chase

FOLLAND Sports have not abandoned hope of signing veteran targetman James Taylor from Sydenhams Premier neighbours Sholing.

The Planemakers intend to have another chat with the former Havant & Waterlooville, Basingstoke and AFC Totton marksman, below, this week.

But, if they fail in their quest to woo Taylor to Follands Park, it is unlikely manager Danny Bowers will look elsewhere.

"I'm interested in James because he would give us that physical element, but otherwise it's difficult finding players – and I can't go spending money I haven't got," he said.

Provided Follands' wretched luck with injuries doesn't continue to dog them in the new year, Bowers is reasonably content with his attacking options.

"We've got Richard Gregory back now after a spell working away and if we can keep Mike Turvey and Daniel Mason injury-free, along with Ryan Long, I'll be happy," he said.

"Daniel's had a problem with the bottom of his foot and he's still not fully fit, but if we can get him playing an hour a game it will take the pressure off Ryan.

"Mike Turvey has been so unlucky with injuries. He and Daniel have both been out for the best part of two or three months.

"Mike's injury-free now and what he really needs is match fitness, but that's not happened with so many games being off."

Turvey went on as a substitute at Verwood last Saturday and made an immediate impact, albeit that the Planemakers were beaten 2-1.

It was the former Gosport and Andover man who was brought down for Ryan Long's penalty but, by then, they were already trailing to two Jack Lovell goals.

There was better news for Follands on Tuesday. With Turvey back in the starting line-up, they recovered from the early blow of conceding a Steve Whitcher goal to beat Bemerton Heath Harlquins 3-1 at Western Way.

Turvey, towering defender Matt Burt – back after a two-match suspension – and the hard-working Long got the goals.

Follands' latest injury is to centre-back Jimmy Vinton who limped off at half-time at Verwood with a knee problem that could sideline him for several weeks.

With no Iain Calder or Burt available, midfielder James Roden did a sterling job at the heart of the Planemakers defence and the equally versatile Pip Nolan played alongside him when Vinton departed.

Premier title triumph.

He has no fear, then, with respect to targeting glory on two fronts – in the league and FA Trophy. Asked about a potential Wembley appearance, McAllister allows himself a moment to dwell on the prospect.

"I've not thought too much about getting there. My first thought was to win promotion. I've been in a final before with Woking and we lost (2-0 against Grays Athletic). It would be very nice to get to another one. That final was actually at Upton Park because Wembley hadn't been finished. It would be nice to get to Wembley for a last time. We've got a tough game in front of us but we've got every chance of getting through.

"We've got a Conference Premier squad at this football club. I really believe we'd do well in that league so we've got nothing to worry about. It would be nice to get to Wembley and have the opportunity to win something again.

"I know the fans desperately want us to win things, as we do ourselves. Let's be honest, we're not expected to get to the final. We'll be the so-called lesser side because we're a league below the top teams that are in it, but we've proved how good we are by beating some good sides already. We deserve to be where we are."

There is no chance, however, of the wily Glasgow-born player taking anything for granted. The insight gleaned across

'We've got a Conference Premier squad at this football club'

McAllister's storied career ensures he knows that football offers no guarantees. His one previous outing at the new Wembley Stadium didn't go according to plan.

"I was on for about ten minutes and had to come off with 12 stitches in my head."

To compound McAllister's desolation, on a day when he entered the field to replace current teammate Stuart Fleetwood, his Luton Town side lost the 2012 Conference Premier play-off final against York City.

A twin determination, to fight on every front for his team and to remain a big part of the Eastleigh FC adventure for some time yet, was reflected in McAllister's pre-season thoughts. He said then: "With how things are going here now I'm hoping I can stay for a few more years, and they could possibly be the best years of my career if we can get some promotions and win a couple of things."

With his momentous day in Bury firmly in mind, McAllister's ambition today has a fresh edge.

"If we get to the Trophy final I'll look back on that and remember that I stayed away when I could have been at my son's birth. I wasn't and hopefully he can see me at Wembley."

Follow me on twitter
@mcnamara_sport



McAllister's third goal at Bury Town just hours after the birth of his second child (picture courtesy of Colin Read).

ing the season's incipiently applied a similarly manager's thoughts. It is not only at Eastleigh, 2012 return a further players have come in, over operating as a censors can never have

lthy thing. It's benefited to be kept on my s do. I think that's

ally, 'another striker club are looking for that's just a part of is healthy. It gets the ally. It's happened to

me before in my career. I've been at places where they've signed players and, conversely, I've come into a club where there are already five or six forwards. It's not a big thought in my mind."

Indeed, McAllister speaks enthusiastically about the collective ability and appetite for success of the squad that has been astutely pieced together by Hill. What's more, the ex-Crawley Town man, in a week when his manager claimed this group has created the best spirit he has ever encountered in the game, is equally effusive on that subject.

"There are lads here who have won things before so they have the experience and know what it will take as the season goes on. The morale and confidence have always existed in this group of players. The

squad we've got together this season, everyone wants to win promotion so you're halfway there already.

"It's easy to say that the spirit is high, but it really is. The best I've known was during my year at Crawley, but this is extremely close to that – if not just as good. The lads are close and everybody has respect for each other which is important. That was something we had at Crawley. Most importantly, we all want to win and we all want to get promoted. It looks great on your CV."

In that 2010/2011 campaign at the Broadfield Stadium, McAllister scored in an FA Cup victory over Derby County. That victory paved the way to a fifth-round clash against Manchester United at Old Trafford. He also contributed 12 strikes to Crawley's runaway Conference

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Terras' victory gives Jason a good start

FORMER Eastleigh goalkeeper Jason Matthews got his tenure as Weymouth's permanent manager off to an ideal start last Saturday.

The Terras claimed a 1-0 home victory over Corby Town in the Southern Premier Division thanks to superb 57th-minute strike from former Hamworthy United and Poole Town marksman Luke Burbidge.

Matthews, pictured, felt Burbidge was excellent in the second half and was also pleased with 20-year-old former Exeter and Bristol City defender George Rigg, signed on non-contract forms less than 24 hours earlier.

"George was outstanding and I will be trying to tie him down now, that's for sure," said Matthews.

"I would also like to big up Burbs because he really has been putting in some great performances for us.

"When a player like him is high on confidence, goals like that are the type of thing they can do, and I cannot praise him enough."

Matthews, meanwhile, confirmed that brothers Michael and Nathan Walker remain on the transfer list due to an ongoing dispute with the club's board.

"They are still on the list but, from a football point of view, they continue to be outstanding for me," said the boss. "Their attitude has been spot on."

Weymouth suffered disappointment on Tuesday when, having taken a third-minute lead through Scott Walker, they were dumped out of the Red Insure Cup 2-1 by Tiverton.

Rain strikes again

THIS WEEK'S league fixture between Graham Rix's Portchester and Sydenhams Premier title favourites Sholing was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch. "The overnight rain just killed it," said Mick Jenkins.

The Sydenhams League Cup semi-final between Petersfield Town and Whitchurch United, due to be played at Alresford's Arlebury Park ground, was also rained off.



Taffy's a force at 47

GRAHAM Kemp has revealed that he tried to sign evergreen midfielder Taffy Richardson when he took over at Winchester City during the summer.

Kemp, now boss of City's Sydenhams Premier rivals Hamworthy United, came face to face with Richardson last Saturday during his side's 1-0 away win at Bournemouth Poppies, writes **WENDY GEE**.

Veteran Richardson recently dual-registered for Ken Vaughan's Poppies and, even at the age of 47, Kemp believes he is still a force to be reckoned with on the Wessex scene.

"I tried to sign Taffy when I went to Winchester over the summer and have managed against teams he has played for," he said.

"He knows exactly what it takes to win matches and you can never underestimate a team with such a driving force in it."

A second-half strike by teenager Alex Martin clinched the points for Hamworthy at Victoria Park.

But enraged Poppies boss Vaughan felt a controversial call by referee Steve Barclay had cost his side a share of the derby day spoils.

With the score 0-0, the game's big talking point came on the hour when Bournemouth's top scorer Martin Warren was

impeded by United defender Dan Haysom.

Vaughan was adamant the infringement had denied his side a goal scoring chance, but Barclay, who gave the foul, failed to brandish a card.

Moments later Hamworthy's Lee Diaper found space on the right and drilled the ball in for Martin to snatch victory.

"Their player was the last man, it was as blatant as blatant can be," fumed Vaughan. "The referee has not even booked him and I found that completely disrespectful."

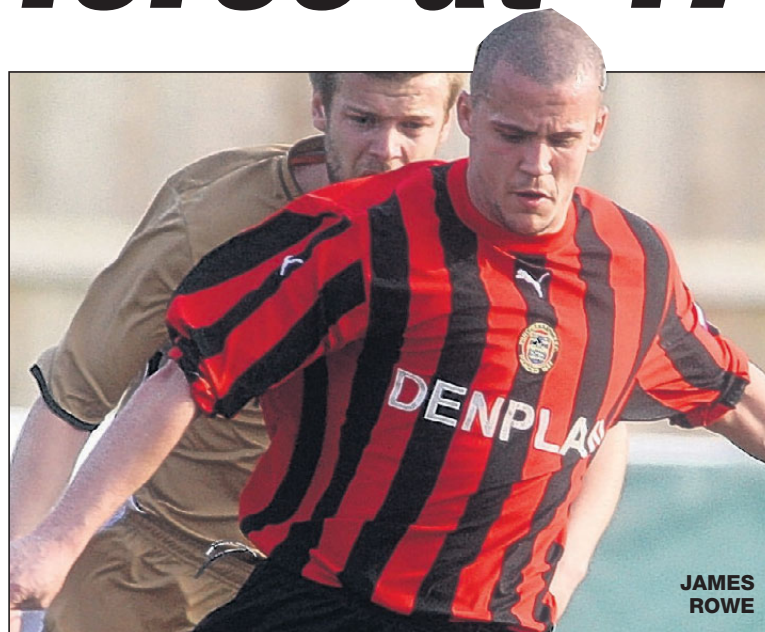
Kemp disagreed with Vaughan's assessment of the incident, but admitted his side were fortunate to take the points.

"Our keeper had already cleared the ball, so there was no way Martin Warren was going to get it," he said. "If our centre-half steps across him, then that happens all over the park and I can't see that being a red card."

Referring to the smash-and-grab nature of Hamworthy's win, Kemp admitted: "I had my mask on I think, it was a bit of a robbery."

Poppies had been hoping to put Saturday's disappointment behind them with a positive result at Newport IoW on Tuesday, but the game was postponed due to a waterlogged pitch.

ACTION MAN:
Taffy Richardson.



JAMES ROWE

Rowe signs for United

HAMWORTHY United have snapped up former AFC Bournemouth midfielder James Rowe.

The 26-year-old, pictured above, who was handed his first-team debut at Dean Court at the age of 17, went on to feature for several non-League clubs, including Dorchester, Bashley, Winchester City and Poole Town, following his Cherries release.

After a spell out of the game, he joined the Hammers for training last week and impressed enough for United boss Graham Kemp to take a chance on his

talent.

"Like many players, football has to fit round James's work, so it is a bit of a trial period to begin with, but it can only benefit both parties in the short term," said Kemp.

"He is what I class as a proper footballer who thinks about the game."

"When I sign players I don't want them to come in and play to a Wessex League standard."

"I want them to be responsible for raising the standard of our players and James is certainly capable of doing that."

Uni soccer course kicks off

THE Sydenhams Wessex League is going into partnership with Southampton Solent University to provide professional training for club administrators.

As part of the collaboration – the first of its kind in the country – the university is developing an online learning course for clubs keen to sharpen their business skills as well as their ball skills.

Funded by a development grant from the Football Association, it will be adapted from a distance learning course created and run by the university for the League Managers' Association.

SWL members will work with experts from Southampton Solent's football studies and learning technologies departments to adapt, design and develop the new online course.

Phil Green, director of Sport Solent, explained: "The university's academic provision, facilities and research and consultancy work is having a recog-

nised impact in the football industry. This, coupled with our expert knowledge of learning technologies, makes us the perfect partner."

"We are looking forward to working with members of the board to provide an online learning resource that benefits the individual, the club and the league."

The course will also be available to people who are interested in getting involved with their local club.

Bob Purkiss, SWL development officer, said: "This course will enable more people to get involved in the game and gain a qualification that is transferable."

"We hope it will encourage people of all ages to get involved and enjoy being part of a football club."

SWL chairman Ian Hoare and Green sealed the collaboration by signing a partnership agreement at Totton & Eling Sports Club.

For more details contact league secretary John Gorman on 01256 770059.



DONE DEAL: Left to right: Phil Green, director of Sport Solent and Ian Hoare, Sydenhams League chairman.

SEE MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO FOR MORE NON-LEAGUE NEWS

Non-league Football



Ex-Saint signs for Portchester

AFC PORTCHESTER have underlined their ambition by signing ex-Saints wide man Jake Thomson from Salisbury City.

Once part of the same Saints academy set-up as England's Theo Walcott and the world's most expensive player Gareth Bale, the 24-year-old has not been smiled on so kindly by the footballing gods.

But the Portsmouth-born Trinidad & Tobago international will be among friends at Portchester as he looks to get his career back on track.

NOW AND THEN: Jake Thomson, pictured in action with Salisbury left, and with Theo Walcott, centre, and Gareth Bale, right, during their Saints Academy days.

Wendy Gee

wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

Thomson started out at St Mary's and made 16 first team appearances for Southampton, making his debut against Cardiff City in August 2008.

He spent time on loan at AFC Bournemouth and Torquay United while still a Saint and has since played for Exeter City, Forest Green Rovers and Newport County.

He came back to the area and signed for Conference Premier new boys Salisbury in August but has had limited opportuni-

ties at Old Sarum.

As a teenager, Thomson was capped by England at under-16, 17 and 18 levels.

He then nailed his colours to the Trinidad & Tobago mast and lined up alongside fellow ex-Saint Kenwyne Jones for two World Cup qualifiers.

Given the quality of his CV, playing in the Sydenhams Premier Division appears to be a big step down for Thomson.

But, with ex-Arsenal and England star Graham Rix as head coach, Portchester are no ordinary Wessex side and are setting their stall out to be the area's next upwardly mobile club, following in the footsteps of neighbours Gosport Borough.

Mick Jenkins, the Wicor Rec outfit's director of football, said: "Signing Jake is a statement of intent. We're looking at bringing in players with the right ability who are geared up for the next level."

"Myself, Graham (Rix) and (coach) Louis Bell watched Jake playing in a friendly for Salisbury's development team."

"Louis pursued it because I don't think the boy's been getting games at Salisbury."

"He's a local Portsmouth lad and he wants to get his head down, not travel too much and get on with playing football."

"He'll add quality to us as a wide player."

"Yes, he should be playing higher than the Wessex League, but then so should Lewis Stockford, Nathan Lynch, Nathan Kirby, Simon Woods, Joe Bye.... I could go on and on with the players we've got in our team."

"We are trying to build for the next level and you can never have enough good players."

Portchester coach Bell knows Thomson of old.

He coached the Portsmouth Schools side - including the midfielder - to English Schools' Trophy glory ten years ago.

"I always thought Jake would go on to play professional football," he said.

"He comes to us from Salisbury with everything to prove."

Non-league News

Captain Fantastic is a history maker

GOSPORT Borough's 'captain fantastic' Jamie Brown turned history maker last Saturday.

While Brown's old club Eastleigh reached the FA Trophy quarter-finals for the first time ever by edging Dover Athletic 3-2 at the Silverlake, Borough were doing likewise at Hungerford Town where the midfield warrior's inspired second-half strike proved the difference between the sides.

Ex-Pompey man Sammy Igoe provided the assist with a free-kick from midway inside the Hungerford half and a deadly combination of skill and determination from Brown, pictured below, did the rest.

"Sammy put a great free-kick into the box and Jamie Brown, back to goal, showed great desire to get in front of the defender and volley into the top corner," said Borough boss Alex Pike. "Jamie's our top scorer and it was a great finish from him, worthy of winning any game."

"We knew it would be a difficult place to come to get a result, but the lads stuck to the game plan and here we are into the quarter-finals."

"We've got a small budget and to get to the last eight of a national cup at this level is a great achievement."

Southampton-based Brown very nearly undid his good work when he was adjudged to have fouled Hungerford's Jon Boardman at the expense of a penalty. With regular spot kick taker Matt Draycott having already been substituted by the Southern Premier hosts, skipper Matt Day had his effort saved by Borough 'keeper Nathan Ashmore.

Gosport's reward for their historic win is a long trek to Conference North leaders North Ferriby United on February 1.

On paper it looks like the short straw, considering neighbours Havant & Waterlooville - 1-0 winners over Ebbsfleet - have drawn a huge Hampshire derby against Aldershot Town at home.

But Pike is looking forward to visiting Hull-based North Ferriby, saying: "It's always nice to play a team from a different league away from home."

"When I was lucky enough to win the FA Vase with Wimborne (in 1992), we had some really long trips, but I saw the team spirit grow."



Four aim to step up

AFC PORTCHESTER are one of four Sydenhams Premier clubs - along with Sholing, Winchester City and Newport IoW - to have applied for promotion to the Southern League.

Realistically director of football Mick Jenkins does not envisage them gate-crashing the top two this term.

But, in signing the likes of ex-Saint Jake Thomson and former Blackfield & Langley striker Nathan Lynch, Portchester are already putting the

building blocks in place for a major push for honours in 2014/15.

"We're looking towards a strong squad and I don't think the signings will stop there. There are one or two more we would like to bed in before the end of April," said Jenkins.

"We wouldn't turn down the offer of promotion if we did finish second, but I think the top two will stay as they are this season with Sholing winning it and Winchester second."

"We've said all along that top-six or

top-eight is our goal and we're still on track. We respect clubs like Newport, Bemerton, Alesford, Blackfield and also Whitchurch, who are having a very good season, and we're trying to get in among that group. Anything above sixth would be a bonus and we're really thinking about a major push next season."

With their sponsors' lounge close to completion and the foundations dug out for a new stand to sit alongside the terrace they opened last summer,

Portchester are making sure their off-field progress keeps pace.

"I've got to say that for me personally it's fantastic how results have improved since Graham Rix and Louis Bell took the reins in March. That's no disrespect to the previous management, it's just how it is," said Jenkins.

"We've worked hard defensively to stop conceding and we have Simon Woods, Jamie Musselwhite, Nathan Kirby and Nathan Lynch all scoring goals. Hopefully Jake (Thomson) will be the supply line for more."

"When you look at what Alex Pike and Mick Catlin have achieved at Gosport (taking them into the Conference South), that's the benchmark for us in this area."

Portchester impress Sholing boss

AFC Portchester's rapid progress this season has not gone unnoticed by Dave Diaper, manager of Sydenhams Premier title favourites Sholing.

Providing Diaper is satisfied his Boatmen can sustain Southern League football next season, it is likely they will accept promotion if, as expected, they win the league.

But, even if Sholing remain a Wessex club, Diaper is convinced Portchester will have a major say in the 2014/15 Sydenhams title race.

"I've got a lot of time for Portchester. They've done wonders and they're going to be massive next year," he predicted. "Whether we're still in the league or not, they will be the team to watch out for."

"(Ex-Gosport boss) Mick Marsh is there and he's a good football man who I know."

"I don't know (head coach) Graham Rix, but he's obviously had a big impact on Portchester and you've got to respect what they're doing down there."

"This season there's been a lot of rubbish flying around in the league, mainly aimed at us, but all we're focused on is doing our job properly and it's good for the Wessex League to have so many strong sides."

"There's nothing between us, Alesford and Blackfield, before they hit the self-destruct button, Winchester and Portchester. When we were in the Wessex League before it was even stronger when Poole, AFC Totton and Gosport were in it."

"But even now, if you compare us to, say, the Hellenic League, the Wessex is a force."

"We had three - and it could have been four (had Moneyfields not been thrown out) - in the FA Vase last 32 today. That's how strong it is!"

Diaper was also highly complimentary about Portchester's professionalism regarding the postponement of Tuesday's scheduled league game between the clubs at water-logged Wicor Rec.

"I was impressed by the way they dealt with it," he said.

"Mick Jenkins (director of football) let us know quite early in the day that the game was off, which was very good of him."

"Not a lot of managers would do that."

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Byerley links up with old boss at United
WARREN Byerley is linking up again with his former Hamworthy United boss Phil Simkin at Dorchester Town. Simkin has been keen to add a striker to the ranks ever since loanee Brandon Goodship returned to AFC Bournemouth.

And although ex-Gosport Borough man Byerley has not been getting many minutes for Southern Premier outfit Poole Town of late, the Dorchester boss is confident the 28-year-old can still do the business.

"Warren is a player I know very well and Tom Killick (Poole boss) has agreed to let us have him on loan for a month," Simkin explained.

"Warren and I have spent a lot of time together over the years and he has always done well for me.

"He has not had the best of luck with injuries in his career, to be fair to him, but he has always scored goals and, hopefully, he can do the same now."



Simkin worked with Byerley, pictured, during his time as Hamworthy boss and also came close to signing him for Dorchester around this time

last year.

"He has not played very much since he has been at Poole, but regardless of the level of football, a goalscorer is a goalscorer, and I have no doubts he will score goals for us," Simkin added.

With skipper Mark Jermyn and centre-half partner Steve Walker unavailable last Saturday, 41-year-old former Eastleigh defender and Blackfield & Langley boss Ashley Vickers stepped in as a favour to Simkin for Dorchester's Skril Conference South trip to Boreham Wood.

It ended in a 5-0 thrashing for the rock-bottom Magpies and Simkin admitted: "We lost our centre-half pairing through suspension and you can't take that out of any side and not notice a difference.

"Ashley Vickers came in at the back and Jake Smeeton did really well alongside him, but against such quality it was difficult for us."

WE'RE BACKING MILLERS' CHIEF



ED HOLMES: 'A fun guy'

STUART Hussey says Angus Steel will have the full support of himself and brother Matt as he takes on the "difficult job" of chairman of Totton & Eling.

Steel – managing director of Winchester-based company Heat Your Home For Less Ltd – first joined the Millers as a sponsor prior to the Husseys taking charge of team affairs.

But the brothers have known Steel for years and, in wishing him well in his new role, younger sibling Stuart says his biggest regret is that the struggling Sydenhams Premier club is not in a healthier state for the new chairman to inherit, *writes WENDY GEE.*

"Andrew's a very well-known guy in Southampton and I wish him good luck," said Hussey.

"It's a difficult job he's taken on because we're in the same position now as when Matt and I first came into the club (in February last year). We're still a non-paying club, but the

Hussey brothers support Angus in his new T&E role

plan was to get a bar to bring in revenue and create a long-term budget. It was very much a three-year plan.

"But we're in a bit of debt with a few bills to pay and now Angus, together with (vice-chairman/director of football) Andy Tipp, is trying to get a fundraising race night organised.

"Angus is a football man, which can only be good for the club, and we've got a nice ground and the pitch is okay.

"But we desperately need a bar and, also, it would be nice to see a few old faces back.

"Over the last 18 months a lot of the old crowd have left, people who did a lot of work behind the scenes, and it would be good to see them at the fundraiser.

"I'm sure that if any of those people wanted to come back to Totton & Eling, Angus and Andy would welcome them with open arms."

Former club chairman Ed Holmes remains managing director of Miller Park Limited, the management company set up to hold the long-term lease of T&E's stadium. He is also managing director of Testwood Park Limited, who last week publicly

Riley a man of all trades

STEVE Riley was kitman, physio and goalkeeping coach for AFC Totton at Hitchin Town last Saturday – and, in between times, he managed the team to a 1-1 draw!

With a couple of his backroom staff unable to make the trip, Riley, his assistant Chris Ferrett and chairman Andy Straker sorted the kit between them and Riley also did the strapping and massage for the players as well as warming up ex-Saints Academy goalkeeper Steve Mowthorpe for his first-team debut.

Riley and his inexperienced, young side have taken some unfair flak this season from people frustrated by the cash-strapped club's Southern Premier Division struggles.

But his commitment has not gone unnoticed by his players and Ryan Hill – one of the last remaining senior squad members from last season – was unequivocal in his support of the manager when he took to Twitter that evening.

The experienced former Dorchester Town and Gosport Borough right-back Tweeted: "Great result today against an organised team.

"Plaudits need to go out to these young lads playing for free!!

"Not only that, Riles is manager,



PLENTY OF JOBS TO DO: AFC Totton boss Steve Riley, left.

physio, kitman!

"Anyone who criticises him or Fezza (Ferrett) clearly doesn't know about non-league football or football in general for that matter.

"Not sure how many managers could pull a squad together for free and compete at this level. #GoStags #wewillstayup"

Riley was equally supportive of his chairman this week following criticism of Straker's leadership by Testwood Park Limited (TPL), the company seeking to take over the club.

With hefty debts still to clear, the Stags are in preliminary partnership talks with Totton College which could result in them selling the Testwood Stadium to the college and renting it back.

TPL – headed by former Totton & Eling chairman Ed Holmes – say that selling the "crown jewels" is not the answer and are urging Straker to talk to them about their own proposal to restructure the club and make it profitable.

But Straker is wary of TPL's motives and has reiterated that he

and the club membership wouldn't countenance letting anyone take control who "hasn't got the best interests of AFC Totton at heart."

Supporting Straker's stance, Riley said: "Andy's gone from being a loyal AFC Totton supporter to chairman and people should give him a bit of credit.

"It's all too easy to fire shots at people without knowing what they've inherited from the past regime.

"Andy is trying to fight the club's cause. He's not doing it for himself, he's doing it for AFC Totton.

"He's not interested in the ground, he's focused on being chairman and he's doing a very good job in difficult circumstances."

The club's executive committee confirmed this week that discussions with Totton College are ongoing.

"Our main objective over the coming months is to secure the future of AFC Totton as a whole for the players, members and fans," said a club statement.

"We have no comment regarding the statements made by individuals in last week's press as we are entirely focused on the football club and taking it forward."

STORY TO TELL? EMAIL wendy.gee@dailyecho.co.uk

Non-league Football



STUART HUSSEY

unveiled a proposed financial investment in Southern Premier Division neighbours AFC Totton.

"Ed's a fun guy and we wish him all the best with trying to get in at AFC Totton, but it's disappointing that he's left Totton & Eling when, as my brother puts it, we're very much in the trenches," said Hussey.

"But Angus is chairman now and Matt and I will give him all the support we can.

"With only Angus, Andy and our secretary Chas Wood running the club, the football management are needed just as much on the committee side of things as they are running the team.

"Matt and I have opinions because we're included in trying to find ways to resolve these problems."

Miller Park Limited's directors have stated that they are "fully supportive of Totton & Eling FC" and Hussey said: "Hopefully they will do what Ed said and support T&E through these hard times.

"And hopefully Angus will get people along and we can build this as a community club.

"Angus has been voted in until the end of the season and he's in it for football reasons.

"He wants the team to improve and I've seen him at the ground on matchdays working in the kitchen and doing the hospitality, so he's not frightened of getting his hands dirty.

"Myself, my brother, Andy and Chas, who's a really good secretary, will give him all the support he needs."

Whether Testwood Park Limited will win over their AFC Totton doubters remains to be seen.

In the meantime, Hussey would like to forge a relationship with T&E's near neighbours that would benefit both clubs.

He said: "From this side of the fence it looks as if (Stags chairman) Andy Straker has got his wits about him and has AFC Totton's best interests at heart.

"If there's anything the two clubs can do help each other out with players etc, then so be it."

Players are chipping in

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

T&L hope to bank some points

CO-MANAGER Stuart Hussey has thanked his players for helping Totton & Eling through a soggy winter.

Given the amount of rain that's fallen over the past month, it's been difficult for nearly all clubs to find suitable training venues – and even more so for non-paying outfits like T&E.

Fortunately, though, the Sydenhams Premier Division relegation battlers have managed to find a way of keeping fit thanks to the goodwill of their players.

Hussey said: "It's been tough to be able to keep training, but we've got a good group of players here who have contributed towards various venues.

"A lot of teams in our position would have called training off, but our lads have chipped in and we've been to places like Hamble and Fleming Park.

"We're a non-playing club but our lads have done it right and, if anything, they're almost paying subs."

The Millers had banked 18 points from 25 league games heading into today's big 'six-pointer' at home to rock-bottom Romsey Town and Hussey believes they



GOOD NEWS: Adam Lowther, right, is back from injury at Totton & Eling.

will need at least another 12 to be sure of top-flight survival.

"I think we're going to need 30 points to be safe," he said.

"Although we're above a few sides down there, if we don't win we seem to be beaten heavily.

"But, on the other hand, we've won more than those below us. In fact we haven't drawn a game all season.

"Although we all believe we're a mid-table side, the reality is that we're in a relegation battle.

"But back-to-back wins would pull us out of it and we've got a run of games coming up now – Romsey (today) and Bournemouth Poppies (away, next Saturday) – which are six-pointers and

we've got to make them pay.

"The big plus for us is the squad we've got going into these games.

"Adam Lowther came on as a sub last week after two or three months out injured and he makes a big difference with his energy getting round the pitch.

"Adam's had a knee problem – basically the kneecap has moved – but there's nothing they can do about it and he's going to try and play on with it.

"(Ex-Eastleigh and Winchester City midfielder) Matt Gray made his debut and we've also benefited from the experience of Ben Thomson and Richard Morse. Ben still has the ability to whip in quality crosses.

DOUGIE ROWE:



back from travelling now too and I don't know how quickly we can get him involved."

T&E made a bright start at Lymington Town last Saturday as goal sensation Dougie Rowe netted for the 14th time in 15 Wessex games.

But, from leading 1-0 at the break, the afternoon slid steadily downhill for the Millers as new Town signing Jamie Craven's cross was deflected in off T&E defender Scott Gilham and then Morse saw red for raising his hands amid a scuffle five minutes from time.

That was all the invitation Lymington needed to push for a winner and it arrived when Darren Ritchie's shot was parried by 'keeper Kevin O'Rourke. Substitute Tom Smith was quickest to react to the rebound, clinching Town a 2-1 win.

Non-league News

Chiedozie is back with AFC Totton

FORMER AFC Totton loanee Jordan Chiedozie has returned to the Calor Southern Premier Division with Poole Town.

And Dolphins boss Tom Killick is hoping to make the most of the 19-year-old striker's raw potential after taking him on a month's loan from AFC Bournemouth.

Chiedozie, pictured below, comes in as a direct replacement for Poole striker Warren Byerley, who will bid to boost his own match fitness with a similar spell at Conference South strugglers Dorchester.

Chiedozie – son of former Leyton Orient, Notts County and Spurs winger John – showed great promise when he joined Totton on loan around this time last year, but his Testwood Stadium stay was cut short by a knee injury at the start of February.

He signed a loan deal with Poole in October last year, but Killick said: "It was so frustrating for Jordan when he was here before because his game time was curtailed.

"But, in the minutes he did play, we could see he was a very sharp player.

"He is quick and direct with good feet and is a different type of player to Dan Cann and Michael Charles.



"That variation will be important to us during a busy schedule and I imagine he will get significant game time with the fixtures we have coming up."

Chiedozie went on as a 60th-minute sub for Charles last Saturday as promotion-chasing Poole hit back at the death for a 1-1 draw at St Neots.

Star defender Will Spetch thumped home Steve Devlin's 90th-minute corner after Lewis Hilliard's first-half goal had put the fifth-to-bottom Saints in the driving seat.

It was the fifth time the Dolphins had changed a result with a last-minute goal this season – a tenacious trait which has added eight points to their league tally.

"It was no less than we deserved because we dominated the match after half-time," said Killick.

"It was a reasonable point and I think St Neots will prove to be a lot stronger than the league table suggests as the season goes on."

KEEP UP TO DATE WITH NON-LEAGUE IN THE DAILY ECHO

Non-league Football

Non-league News

Costly for Moneys...

MONEYFIELDS' season has lurched from bad to worse after having six points docked by the Sydenhams Wessex League.

The Dover Road outfit were thrown out of the FA Vase, along with opponents Bittou AFC last week, after a mass brawl broke out during their third round tie.

Now Moneys have been hit by a points deduction after failing to get international clearance for striker Steve Hutchings following his return from Australia.

Miles Rutherford's men clawed back one of the lost points on Tuesday in a 2-2 Sydenhams Premier draw at Hordean.

Winger Jack dies

IT was with great sadness that Fareham Town broke the news of the death of their former left winger Jack Orford, aged 84, this week.

Jack played many times for Town in the 1950s and was best known as a free-scoring winger.

"Our condolences and thoughts are with his family," said a club spokesman.

Blow for Dorchester

JAKE McCarthy's loan spell at Dorchester Town has been stalled by injury.

The AFC Bournemouth defender, who has a spell with AFC Totton earlier this season, signed youth loan terms with the Magpies last week.

But no sooner had he put pen to paper with the Conference South basement boys than he turned his ankle during a training session with Cherries. At first Dorchester boss Phil Simkin, pictured, was hopeful the first-year pro might shake off the problem, but it's more serious than first thought.

"We might not see Jake for months," he said. "I have been told the injury is a bad one and there could well be ligament damage. It's a huge blow."

Town snap up Kittle

NEW Milton Town have welcomed an experienced forward into the ranks.

The Sydenhams One club have signed ex-Verwood Town striker Joe Kittle, who has previously done the rounds with Christchurch, Brockenhurst and Bournemouth Poppies.

CHRISTMAS PUDDINGS!

Wendy Gee

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NON-LEAGUE REPORTER

GIVEN the injuries, suspensions and unavailabilities they were having to contend with, you would have thought Winchester City would have been glad of the festive break.

But manager Neil Hards admits the weather-interrupted Christmas period "did us no favours".

Heading into the Yuletide celebrations, Winchester had strung together an impressive six straight wins, banging in 22 goals and conceding one.

But those good habits came undone at Bournemouth Poppies on December 28 – albeit that City got themselves out of jail with two late goals to scrape a 4-3 result.

The warning signs were there, however, and it came as no great surprise to Hards when bottom club Romsey rocked up at the Denplan City Ground some 48 hours later and pulled off a shock 3-2 victory.

Winchester went some way to winning back their stripes last Saturday, sinking ten-man Hordean 3-0 to strengthen their grip on second spot in the Sydenhams Premier Division.

City's hard work undone over the festive season

UNHAPPY: Neil Hards reckons City deserved Romsey defeat.



And they followed that by climbing top of the table with a 5-1 midweek success at Lymington Town.

But Hards is all too aware that there could be more harsh lessons to be learned by his promotion-hungry troops if they abandon the team ethic that underpinned their superb pre-Christmas form.

He said: "We got what we deserved against Romsey – nothing."

"It wasn't the technical side Romsey were better at, it was the groundwork and the work done off the ball."

"I've always told our players that if they put in the hard graft, they will have the ball at their feet a lot more."

"But against Bournemouth and Romsey they didn't do that."

"I don't know if they'd had too much Christmas pud-

ding or what, but all the hard work we'd put in came undone in those two games."

The only consolation for Hards is that, with Sholing almost nailed on for the title, Winchester are still well placed to finish runners-up and hopefully have a shout of promotion.

"I think Sholing are over the hill and gone with all their games in hand, so finishing first is a tough ask," he said.

"But we've got a good goal difference and it's in our own hands to finish second."

"Hopefully there's still a chance we can move up from this level of football if we pull our socks up and our fingers out."

"The Christmas period wasn't ideal, but it wasn't a complete disaster either – and it might have been the kick up the bum we needed."

"Sometimes you get into a comfort zone thinking you just need to turn up to get three points, but it doesn't happen like that."

"You've got to knuckle down first and earn the right to play and that's when the ability comes through."

Winchester certainly heeded Hards' words at the start of Saturday's game against Hordean.

Doing the simple things

But standards slipped following the sending-off of Deans' keeper Stefan Clark which resulted in Chris Flood making it 2-0 from the penalty spot.

"We played well in the first 20 minutes but, all of a sudden, they're down to ten men and the whole mindset changes," said Hards.

"The feeling is that it's going to be easier against ten, so they start trying to do too much when they don't need to."

"It's all about doing the simple things well and playing as a unit rather than as a group of individuals."

"If you play as a unit, you look better, and our lads have to realise they've got to do it as a team."

With both attacking full-backs, Danny King and Dan Thompson, injured, Hards turned to two promising reserve players to bring width to his side.

Ryan Holloway – son of physio Steve – has been patrolling the right flank while Ben Stanbrook has come in on the left.

"We've been short of players lately. Danny King, Dan Thompson and Liam Green have been out, Ross Bottomley's been suspended, Callum Casson's been in Hong Kong and squad player John Borg was in Guernsey," said Hards.

With that in mind City have added to their squad, bringing in midfielder Cassius Newton – son of former Chelsea assistant boss, Eddie – from Eastleigh and left-sided player Dan Bapty from Stockbridge.

Winchester went in 1-1 at half-time at Lymington on Tuesday after Chris Mason's opener had been wiped out by Shane Sims.

But they ran away with it after the break as Flood helped himself to a hat-trick and Daryll Phillips struck from 12 yards.



HOT SHOT: Winchester Chris Flood, left, hit a midweek hat-trick for Winchester City.

MORE NON-LEAGUE FOOTBALL IN MONDAY'S DAILY ECHO

Non-league Football

Bristow wants 'Stoke to shake off the blues

JASON Bristow wants his Basingstoke Town players to put Tuesday's Whitehawk night-mare quickly behind them.

The Camrose club went down 3-1 to the struggling Conference South newcomers, producing a performance that manager Bristow admitted was one of their worst of the season.

It meant they had won just one of their last nine league games – although they remained just five points outside the play-off zone going into today's trip to Tom Widdrington's Eastbourne Borough.

"We were poor on Tuesday and it's important we put it behind us," said Bristow.

"We have got to be a bit more professional in terms of managing the game because we make it tough for ourselves at times.

"It is important we do not concede goals and give sides a lift.

"With the pitch very heavy we struggled to keep the ball and surrendered possession way too easily.

"We were beaten by a side who, on the night, battled harder than we did and that is hard to take."

Town take a break from league action on Tuesday to concentrate on securing a place in the semi-finals of the Hampshire FA Senior Cup.

Standing between them and the last four are Whitchurch United, who are having a terrific first season back in the Sydenhams Wessex League top flight.

"It's something different, but the Hampshire

Cup brings its own excitement and pressure," said Bristow, sizing up the trip to Longmeadow.

"We are looking to get to the semi-finals and, hopefully, play in a final at a decent ground.

"If we play the way we can, the result should take care of itself. But we will certainly not take Whitchurch lightly. They have a lot of local players who will want to get one over on us and they are doing really well in their league.

"We will need to approach the game with the same professionalism as we do with any league game because they have players who will cause us problems if we do not do our jobs properly."

Former Tottenham youngster Billy Granger could make his Town debut at Whitchurch. The goalkeeper has been signed on non-contract terms as cover for Joe McDonnell, who has a dislocated finger.

Basingstoke are one of four Conference South clubs left in the county cup with Havant & Waterlooville, Farnborough and Gosport Borough all in action next week.

This year's HSC final will be played at Portsmouth's Fratton Park ground.

● Hampshire Senior Cup quarter-final ties: Whitchurch Utd v Basingstoke Town (Jan 21), Havant & Waterlooville v Farnborough (Jan 20), Gosport Borough v AFC Bournemouth (Jan 21), AFC Portchester v Petersfield Town (Jan 21).



JASON BRISTOW: The manager rated Basingstoke's display one of the season's worst.

Non-league News

Vale trial for Spetch
POOLE Town defender Will Spetch is set to clock up the miles this week following confirmation of his trial with Port Vale.

The League One outfit will run the rule over Spetch from Monday, but he will still be available for the Dolphins' Southern Premier fixture at Arlesey Town on Tuesday.

Vale are the latest club to invite Spetch in for a trial after he showcased his talents at Cherries, Portsmouth, Huddersfield Town and AFC Wimbledon.

Hoodoo hits Bash

JOINT-BOSS Paul Gazzard admits lack of experience could scupper Bashley's slim hopes of Southern Premier survival.

The Foresters' home hoodoo continued with a 3-1 defeat by Corby Town – their ninth successive league reverse at Bashley Rec.

Ex-Team Solent and Blackfield & Langley marksman Manny Soetan bagged his second goal in four days, following Saturday's encouraging 2-1 win at Frome, but rock-bottom Bash again struggled to implement their counter-attacking style on home soil.

"It's harder to catch teams on the break at home," said Gazzard, pictured. "It probably suits us more to play teams on their patch where they are likely to come out and play a bit more."

"We played very well at Frome but, at this level of football, you have to reach those levels game after game which is where our lack of experience shows."

"It (avoiding relegation) will be a big ask now and every time we fail to pick up points it gets harder."

Chalk blames the ref
BEMERTON Heath Harlequins boss Ian Chalk wasn't best pleased with Amesbury referee Tony Welsh in the wake of Tuesday's 3-1 home defeat by Folland Sports.

The Wiltshire hosts rushed into an early lead through Steve Whitcher at Western Way only to be sunk by three goals in the last 20 minutes from Mike Turvey, Matt Burt and Ryan Long.

But Chalk felt poor refereeing decisions had contributed to his side losing their second game in four days after narrowly losing 2-1 at title favourites Sholing last Saturday.

"He was the worst referee I've ever come across," he fumed. "It was beyond a joke."

THIS WEEK'S NATIONAL AND LOCAL FOOTBALL FIXTURES

Monday, January 20

BARCLAYS PREMIER LEAGUE

West Brom v Everton (8.00)

HAMPSHIRE FA SENIOR CUP

Quarter-final: Havant & Waterlooville v Farnborough.

CALOR SOUTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: Redditch v St Neots.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: Winchester City v Bemerton HH.

Tuesday, January 21

FOOTBALL CONFERENCE

South: Concord v Chelmsford, Staines v Maidenhead, Tonbridge Angels v Bath City, Weston-super-Mare v Eastleigh.

HAMPSHIRE FA SENIOR CUP

Quarter-finals: Whitchurch Utd v Basingstoke Town, Gosport Borough v AFC Bournemouth, AFC Portchester v Petersfield Town.

CALOR SOUTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: Arlesey v Poole, Bashley v Stourbridge, Biggleswade v Frome, Hungerford v Chippenham.

Division One South & West: Bridgwater v Taunton, Fleet Town v Thatcham, North Leigh v Bishops Cleeve, Shortwood v Yate, Tiverton v Wimborne (7.30).

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Blackfield & Langley v Downton, Bournemouth Poppies v Verwood, Fareham v Fawley AFC, Hamworthy Utd v Romsey, Moneyfields v Alresford, Sholing v Horndean.

Wednesday, January 22

CAPITAL ONE SEMI-FINAL

Second Leg: West Ham v Man City

SKY BET LEAGUE

League 1: Crewe v Milton Keynes Dons, Peterborough v Notts County

League 2: Chesterfield v Rochdale

THE SKRILL CONFERENCE

Premier: Barnet v Aldershot, Gateshead v Welling.

Kidderminster v Dartford, Macclesfield v Lincoln City,

Southport v Wrexham, Tamworth v Cambridge Utd, Woking v Chester.

South: Concord Rangers v Chelmsford, Dorchester v Hayes & Yeading, Staines Town v Maidenhead Utd, Tonbridge Angels v Bath City, Weston-S-Mare v Eastleigh.

CALOR SOUTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: Cambridge City v Weymouth, Corby v AFC Totton.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Brockenhurst v Bemerton HH, Christchurch v Newport IoW.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Aldermaston v Winchester City.

Division One South & West: Guildford v Godalming, Swindon Supermarine v Didcot.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: Wimborne v Dorchester Town.

Division One East: Petersfield Town v Colden Common.

Wyvern Shield League Phase: D. Newport IoW v Moneyfields.

Thursday, January 23

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v New Milton.

Friday, January 24

THE FA CUP with Budweiser

Fourth Round: Arsenal v Coventry, Nottm Forest v Ipswich/Preston (8.00)

SKY BET LEAGUE

League 1: Brentford v Gillingham

Saturday, January 25

THE FA CUP with Budweiser

Fourth Round: Birmingham v Swansea, Man City v Watford, Bolton v Cardiff, Bournemouth v Liverpool (12.45), Huddersfield v Charlton/Oxford Utd, Port Vale

Portchester v Christchurch, Brockenhurst v Whitchurch and Folland Sports v Winchester, Bennett has had the final straw with the weather and has organised a drier place for his team to play with the pitches continuing to be sodden.

"It gets to the point where we can't train and we can't get together anymore, so I've almost sorted with one of our boys Craig Vigar to train at the school he works at," Bennett said.

The school near Wellow has a swimming pool, gym facilities and a hall where the

v Brighton, Rochdale v Sheff Wed Sheff Utd v Fulham (Postponed), Southampton v Yeovil Southend v Hull

Stenage v Everton (5.30) Sunderland v Kidderminster/ Wigan v Crystal Palace

SKY BET LEAGUE

Championship: Blackburn v Derby, Blackpool v Doncaster, Charlton v Bournemouth, Ipswich v Reading, Leicester v Middlesbrough, Sheff Wed v QPR, Watford v Birmingham, Wigan v Barnsley.

League 1: Bradford v Port Vale, Milton Keynes Dons v Preston, Notts County v Walsall, Oldham v Peterborough, Rotherham v Crawley Town, Swindon v Shrewsbury, Tranmere v Crewe, Wolverhampton v Bristol City

League 2: AFC Wimbledon v Exeter, Accrington Stanley v Bury, Bristol Rovers v Newport County, Burton Albion v Fleetwood Town, Dag & Red v Scunthorpe, Hartlepool v York, Mansfield v Wycombe, Morecambe v Portsmouth, Northampton v Chesterfield, Oxford Utd v Torquay, Plymouth v Cheltenham

THE SKRILL CONFERENCE

Premier: Aldershot v FC Halifax, Barnet v Southport, Braintree Town v Gateshead, Dartford v Cambridge Utd, Forest Green v Chester, Hereford v Salisbury, Hyde v Tamworth, Kidderminster v Macclesfield, Lincoln City v Woking, Luton v Nuneaton, Welling v Alfreton Town, Wrexham v Grimsby

South: Basingstoke v Sutton, Bishops Cleeve v Whitehawk, Boreham Wood v Dover, Bromley v Hayes & Yeading, Chelmsford v Dorchester, Concord v Staines, Eastbourne Borough v Bath City, Eastleigh v Ebbsfleet Utd, Farnborough v Tonbridge Angels, Havant & Waterlooville v Maidenhead, Weston-super-Mare v Gosport Borough

CALOR SOUTHERN PREMIER LEAGUE

Premier Division: AFC Totton v Hemel Hempstead, Banbury v Bideford, Bedford v St Neots, Burnham v Bashley, Chippenham v Weymouth, Frome v Redditch, Hitchin v Corby, Poole v Chesham, St Albans v Arlesey, Stourbridge v Biggleswade, Turro v

Hungerford.

Division One South & West: Bishops Cleeve v Paulton Rovers, Bridgwater v Shortwood, Cirencester v Godalming, Evesham v Didcot, Guildford v Wimborne, Merthyr Town v Clevedon, North Leigh v Thatcham, Stratford v Mangotsfield, Swindon Supermarine v Taunton, Tiverton v Cinderford, Yate v Fleet Town.

SYDENHAMS WESSEX LEAGUE

Premier Division: Bournemouth Poppies v Totton & Eling, Christchurch v Brockenhurst, Fareham Town v Alresford, Horndean v Hamworthy, Lymington v AFC Portchester, Moneyfields v Sholing, Newport IoW v Folland Sports, Romsey v Fawley AFC, Verwood v Blackfield & Langley, Whitchurch v Bemerton HH, Winchester City v Downton.

Division One: Amesbury v Cowes Sports, Andover Town v East Cowes Vics, Fleet Spurs v US

Portsmouth, Hayling Utd v Stockbridge, New Milton v Hythe & Dibden, Petersfield v Andover NS, Ringwood v Laverstock & Ford, Tadley Calvea v Fleet Solent.

PUMA ENGINEERING HAMPSHIRE PREMIER LEAGUE

PEHPL Cup, quarter-finals: Baffins Milton Rovers v AFC Aldermaston (provisional), Fleetlands or Paulsgrove v Overton (provisional).

Premier Division: Baffins Milton Rovers v Otterbourne, Clanfield v Liphook, Colden Common v Winchester Castle, Fleetlands v AFC Stoneham, Hedge End Rangers v Headley Utd, Liss Athletic v Bournemouth Sports, Locks Heath v AFC Aldermaston, Overton v QK Southampton.

Division One: Andover Lions v Bush Hill, Durlay v Infinity, Four Marks v Hamble Club, Lyndhurst v Broughton, Michelmersh & Timsbury v Upham.

Combination: AFC Stoneham v Fleetlands, Hamble Club v Hedge End Rangers, Liphook v Michelmersh & Timsbury, Otterbourne v Clanfield, Paulsgrove v Liss Athletic, Winchester Castle v Overton.

WYVERN COMBINATION LEAGUE

Premier Division: Bemerton HH v AFC Totton, Sholing v AFC Portchester.

Division One East: Aldersford Town v Petersfield, Alton v Tadley Calvea, Folland Sports v Horndean, Locks Heath v Colden Common.

Division One West: East Cowes Vics v Lymington Town, Fawley AFC v Christchurch, Hythe & Dibden v Romsey, Laverstock & Ford v Verwood, Team Solent v Ringwood.

Wyvern Shield League Phase: Wimborne v US Portsmouth.

Sunday, January 26

THE FA CUP with BUDWEISER

Fourth Round Chelsea v Stoke (3.30) Sheff Utd v Norwich/Fulham (1.00)

THIS WEEKEND was yet another of washouts in the Sydenhams Wessex Leagues, WRITES PETER HOWARD.

ALL league fixtures were off once more across the Wessex and it has got that bad that Romsey Town manager Carl Bennett has completed his search for an indoor facility that his team can use while the weather continues to be awful.

With Romsey's game off against fellow Premier Division strugglers Totton & Eling postponed on Saturday as well as AFC

Portchester v Christchurch, Brockenhurst v Whitchurch and Folland Sports v Winchester, Bennett has had the final straw with the weather and has organised a drier place for his team to play with the pitches continuing to be sodden.

"It gets to the point where we can't train and we can't get together anymore, so I've almost sorted with one of our boys Craig Vigar to train at the school he works at," Bennett said.

The school near Wellow has a swimming pool, gym facilities and a hall where the

Bypass Ground boys can shelter and prepare for the relegation dog fight they're facing in the Wessex.

Their next fixture sees them visit Graham Kemp's Hamworthy on Tuesday night and they'll be hoping to get back to winning ways – their last win came against high fliers Winchester City at the end of December.

Meanwhile, in Division One Andover New Street's match against Hayling United was postponed along with Cowes Sports v Stockbridge, Hythe & Dibden v Andover Town and Laverstock & Ford v Fleet Spurs.

TODAY'S FOOTBALL RESULTS AND TABLES - SEE PAGE 48

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Who are Ya?

Comrades FC

Jason 'Gumbo' Pretty (Goalkeeper and taxi driver): The lads normally call for a taxi if he makes a clanger.

Mandeep Singh: Tough tackler that can give a referee grey hair.

Luke Pilgrim: The only position Luke hasn't played is in goal but that must be to do with his height.

Will Phillips: Mr Calm in the centre of defence.

Kieran Hobbs: A new boy at centre half – pops up with a goal or two.

Lewis Morse: The galloping winger with an eye for goal.

Andy Elliott: Team captain who forms 'the Andes' with Spinksey in Centre midfield.

Andy Spink: An opposition player once described him as David Villa, but Andy said he felt more like Ricky Villa.

Matt Spraggs: With all his twisting and turning it's surprising he doesn't confuse himself as well as the opposition.

Jamie Wilson: Really makes the forward line tick with his pace and trickery.

James Saunders: Laid back youngster who's producing the goods in front of goal this season.

Steve Field: Can play anywhere; Mr Reliable of the team.

Matt Saunders: Will always pop up with a goal at either end of the pitch.

Steve Brockway: Loves to put himself on as sub ten minutes from time so he scores the winner.

Meet the manager

Steve Brockway

Age: 45

From: Bishopstoke

Occupation: Plumber

Position at the club: First team manager

Who do you support: Southampton

Favourite player: Currently Adam Lallana

Best footballing moment: Seeing Saints win the FA Cup as a kid

Best goal you have ever seen: Beckham's chip from the halfway line

Ambition for the club: To keep all the lads together and maybe win some silverware

Team check

Nickname: A bit boring, it's just Comrades

Local pub: The Cricketers

The skipper: Andy Elliott

The moaner: Gumbo

Mr Motivator: Mandeep Singh

Worst haircut: Luke's wedge

Club joker: The Gaffer himself

The professional: Mike Randall

Worst car: Any player that doesn't drive as they have to get the bus

PARK SCRATCHINGS ... PARK SCRATCHINGS CENTRAL COMMAND: NETLEY

THERE was one big difference between last weekend's match between Drew Smith Premier Division high-fliers Netley Central Sports and Comrades and the one they played before a four-week Christmas break – tempo.

The clash prior to the festive period, which Netley won 2-0, was played at breakneck speed while this month's contest was a cumbersome affair.

This time around all the focus was on Comrades, who were looking to recover their pre-festive form that had seen them top the division with an unbeaten record before losses table toppers Cadnam and Netley.

But on a heavy, muddy pitch, and with some players carrying their fair share of festive fitness flaws, the 3-1 defeat for Comrades was one that may not have been too attractive on the eye.

Sodden

"It was a decent enough game of football but not the most fluid – the pitch was very heavy," said Netley boss Jim Langdown.

Following weeks of rainfall and countless games postponed across December, many teams are only just returning to action and pitches – including that Netley's Station Road base – are still in a sodden state.

Strikes from Michael Mullen and Pete McColm, as well as an own goal, made the points safe for Hosts Netley before Comrades' James Saunders netted a consolation.



HOLE IN THE WALL: A Comrades free kick goes through the Netley wall forcing a save from keeper John Betteridge (not pictured).

Order no: 17797545

"It was important that we got back to winning ways immediately after the Christmas break; I was very worried we would struggle to get back in the swing of it," added Langdown.

The opener came after 15 minutes. Mullen couldn't believe his luck as Will Phillips, the Comrades goalkeeper, punted the ball against a teammate as he attempted to clear. That failed effort landed at the feet

of the striker who lofted the ball over the stranded custodian to score.

Misjudged

The second came as a ball into the box was misjudged and skimmed off the head of a Comrades defender – flying into the back of the net.

It continued to be a calamitous day for Phillips as he was again left

high and dry as when he failed to claim a fierce cross from Netley defender McColm which then flew by the former's defenders on its way into the net to put the game out of reach before the interval.

There was a glimmer of hope for Comrades when James Saunders netted with a powerful header from a corner in the second half, but resolute defending from Netley ensured victory.



NETLEY CENTRAL SPORTS: Back row (from left): Jim Langdown (manager), Dean Lowe, Ricky Rawlins, Gary Cozens, John Betteridge, Pete McColm, Paul Vinton (co-manager), Tom Oliphant and Kristian Pell. Front: Micky Mullen, Pete Philpott, Lee Slade, Matt Watts, Shaun Davey and Chris Crook.

Daily Echo pictures by Paul Collins Order no: 17818709

Drew Smith results and scorers in Monday's Echo

PARK SCRATCHINGS ... PARK SCRATCHINGS CRUISE TO LEAGUE DOUBLE



SAFETY FIRST: Matt Watts, right, clears for Netley and, inset, John Betteridge punches clear from Comrades' Lewis Morse. Order nos: 17797527 (main) & 17797586 (inset)

"We were awful," conceded Comrades boss Steve Brockway.

"It was a few mistakes that cost us dear in this one. The game was played with no momentum whatsoever," he added.

"Netley know how to play their pitch and they knew that if they slowed the game down they would stop us playing our own game, which they did effectively.

"We need to get back to winning

ways ideally now, it's between Netley and Cadnam for the title so we've dropped right out of the picture."

Fitness

Langdown, whose team are now level on points with leaders Cadnam who have three games in hand, is now aiming to get his side's fitness back up to scratch with a push to

the Hampshire Premier League in the back of his mind.

"The fitness of the team isn't great, we haven't been able to train after the floodlights at our ground were vandalised," he said.

"After we scored we just had to shut up shop and try and see the game out, which we did.

"Despite some of the team lacking fitness we were looking sharp upfront, Lee Slade and Michael

Mullen looked in good shape. Slade is built like a racehorse; he wasn't affected by the four-week break at all really.

"We're building a foundation to get promoted to the Hampshire Premier League. It is a long-term project and we need to make sure we have a sound financial base to move upwards but what's important at the moment is that we perform as a team."



HEAD FIRST: Netley keeper John Betteridge clears from James Saunders. Order no: 17797554



COMRADES: Back row (from left): Lewis Morse, Matt Saunders, Kieron Hobbs, Jason Pretty, Will Phillips, Matt Spraggs, James Saunders. Front: Steve Field, Mandeep Singh, Andy Elliott, Jamie Wilson, Luke Pilgrim.

Order no: 17797581

Who are Ya?

Netley Central Sports

Jonny 'Pumpkin Head' Betteridge: Usually got a good story from Friday night for the changing room.

Matty 'Wattsy' Watts: Provides real quality at left back or left wing. Don't upset him!

Pete 'Killer Svensson' McCollm: Strong centre half like the ex-Saints favourite Michael Svensson.

Gary 'Cuz' Couzens: Apparently equally at home at right back, centre half, centre mid, right mid or centre forward! Has a bizarre ABBA tattoo on his arm.

Ricky 'Rawlo' Rawlins: Great technical player who is truly versatile but best in centre midfield. Small head, very thin hair.

Shaun 'Shavey' Davey: Even smaller than Wattsy, but is a natural footballer. Just needs to realise November was three months ago!

Pete 'the meat' Philpott: Massive Tottenham fan. If it wasn't for his Xbox and takeaways he would have played a lot higher up. Great touch and weight of pass; bad pace and fitness.

Dean 'Lowey' Lowe: Skipper and tough tackling midfielder with bags of energy and eye on for goal.

Christian 'Pele' or 'Squidward' Pell: Left midfielder 'because he has a left foot'. Great fitness levels.

Micky Mullens: Former Hampshire league golden boot winner but has only scored once this season. Clinical finisher if the game allows him the time to reach the box.

Lee 'The Beast' Slade: Has really impressed with his pace and power up front. Just needs to work on first touch, passing, heading, shooting and he will definitely be one of the best forwards around.

Paul 'Vinnny' Vinton: A real asset at centre half and doubles up as co-manager.

Tom 'Mario' Oliphant: Sublime touch and timing of pass. Most beautiful player in the team; wonderful hair.

Chris Crook: Reliable defender. Told us he'd show us how to drink and play, only to not drink very well, then not play at all!

Jim 'Gaffer' Langdown: Co-manager. Will still get his boots on if we are short ... desperately short.

Nicky 'Wooders' Woodgate: Looks like Freddy Mercury and one of the best forwards around.

Ian 'Quaver Ear' Jones: Way too good for this standard of football.

Dean 'Spartacus' Little: Skipper and midfield general. Skinny legs for a big man.

Andy 'Wynner' Wynn: Tough tackling centre half with great positional skills. Used to play hockey but his bum's too big now for the skirts they had to wear!

Ben Calder: Very calm on the ball, not so calm off it.

Ben Hutchings: Good technically and snappy in the tackle.

Dan Wooldridge: Goalkeeper. Let just 11 league goals in for us one season - lowest in the entire football pyramid - but still looked miserable!

Meet the assistant boss

John Betteridge

Age: 30

Where are you from: Bursledon

Occupation: Plumbing and heating engineer

Who do you support: Tottenham

Favourite player: Teddy Sheringham

Your best footballing moment:

Representing the Royal Navy and Combined

services at U19, U21 and seniors.

Best goal you have ever seen: Ian Jones v

Eastleigh - 50 yard strike

Ambitions for the club: A return to

Hampshire level.

Team check

Nickname: NCFC

Local pub: Netley Central Sports and Social Club, Netley Abbey.

The skipper: Dean Little

The moaner: Pete 'the meat' Philpott

Mr Motivator: Dean Little, Matty Watts, John

Betteridge and the gaffers, Jim Langdown

and Paul Vinton.

Worst haircut: Gary Couzens

Club joker: Ian Jones

The professional: Matty Watts

Who owns the worst car and what is it?

Pete Philpott - a three-wheeled van nick-

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Daily Echo

Non-league Football



STOP: Comrades keeper Jason Pretty saves from Netley Central Sports during the latter's 3-1 Premier Division win (see Park Scratchings page 36).

Order no: 17797525

BOSS GETS JITTERS IN 9-0 WIN

HEDGE End Town's record 9-0 win nearly cost their manager £60!

When they led 5-0 at half-time, Wes Skinner told his players he would not charge match fees if they put ten past fellow Drew Smith Premier Division strugglers AFC Hiltingbury, **writes SIMON WALTER.**

So when they scored their ninth of the afternoon with ten minutes remaining, Skinner was a nervous man.

He laughed: "I didn't think the lads had heard me say they wouldn't have to pay their £5 subs if we got ten, but one of the centre-backs did so I was quite worried when we scored the ninth!"

"I was suddenly on Hiltingbury's side, calling for the linesman to stick his flag up whenever we were threatening another goal."

"It would have cost me £60 and we're hardly rolling in it so I was panicking."

"Everyone saw the funny side!"

The result is the biggest win in Hedge End's history, surpassing a 9-2 win against GE Hamble Club en route to winning last season's Premier Division title.

Targetman Steve Deacon hit a hat-trick and his strike partner Craig Harding also scored twice.

"Steve's just come back from keyhole surgery on his knee but looked really sharp and Craig is a cracking player who I've signed recently," said Skinner.

"He was at Saints with Danny Ings, who's also his best mate. I've bought a players' man of the match award but he's winning it every week. It's ridiculous, I might have to buy another trophy for everyone else!"

"He could easily play at a higher level but he's got a good job and isn't prepared to train twice a week."

Ben Dashwood also scored twice, while Kelvin Kellaway and Blayne Kinley were the other goalscorers.

The win means Hiltingbury have replaced the defending champions at the bottom of the table.

"We struggled early on in the season because of injuries but now we're starting to get everyone back," continued Skinner.

"This was our second win in three games, having beaten Bishopstoke WMC 6-1 recently."

Secretary Dave Helps said: "This was a really good result as it was a proper six-pointer."

"We know how good we are after winning the league last year. But without a youth or reserve set up, we've struggled to replace injured players."

"We can't just go down the pub and ask any Tom, Dick or Harry to play, they have to be of a decent standard."

"Hiltingbury got three of their seven points when they beat us 3-1 earlier in the season, but we're getting players back now."

■ Drew Smith League tables (do not include this weekend's games)

Premier Division							Sporting Wessex								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P	W	D	L	F	A	P		
Cadnam United	8	6	2	0	26	5	20	AFC Nemesis	10	2	2	6	28	39	
Netley Central Spt	11	6	2	3	24	16	20	AFC Hiltingbry Res	11	1	4	6	24	32	
Comrades	9	6	0	3	33	8	18	Harefield Res	6	2	0	4	12	8	
Bishopstoke WMC	10	5	1	4	21	31	16	Weston City	8	0	3	5	11	36	
BTC Soton	9	3	3	3	14	19	12	Junior 5							
Soton University	10	2	4	4	20	25	10		P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Hedge End Town	9	3	0	6	24	26	9	Thompson FC	11	7	3	1	49	19	24
Nursling	6	2	1	3	13	15	7	BTC Soton A	10	8	0	2	51	26	24
AFC Hiltingbury	12	2	1	9	8	38	7	FC White Horse	10	7	1	2	31	18	22
Senior 1							Braishfield Res								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P								
AFC Grains	9	8	1	0	33	5	25	New Forest Res	5	4	0	1	26	9	12
Burridge AFC	11	6	2	3	27	20	20	Waltham Wolves	9	4	0	5	16	30	12
Riverside	10	6	0	4	33	15	18	Upham Res	8	4	0	4	21	38	12
Solent Saints	7	6	0	1	26	8	18	Michelmersh & T A	9	1	1	7	18	34	12
Harefield	9	5	2	2	28	10	17	Hamble United Res	9	1	0	8	15	27	3
Q K Soton Res	11	4	2	5	24	30	14	Shield FC	3	0	0	3	3	16	0
Comrades Res	10	3	0	7	18	27	9	Veterans A							
BTC Soton Res	11	1	2	8	13	40	5		P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Durley Res	12	1	1	10	8	55	4	Sporting BTC	9	8	0	1	35	5	24
Junior 1							Colden Common								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P								
AFC Gulf Western	8	7	0	1	31	10	21	H End Rangers	10	6	1	3	16	8	19
Chamberlayne AFC	8	6	1	1	34	14	19	Hythe Aztecs	6	6	0	0	29	4	18
Chandlers Ford	10	4	3	3	29	23	15	Follands	6	4	1	1	12	4	13
West Totton	8	4	1	3	18	13	13	BTC Soton Vet A	8	4	0	4	10	16	12
Osborne	10	3	1	6	20	37	10	Baddesley Park	11	3	1	7	12	29	10
Langley Manor	7	3	0	4	19	16	9	Locks Heath	8	3	0	5	19	16	9
FC Wellington	10	2	3	5	11	23	9	Woolston	11	1	1	9	13	39	4
Compton	9	2	3	4	18	33	9	R S Winchester	9	0	0	9	10	40	0
Lowford	10	2	2	6	22	33	8	Veterans B							
Junior 2															
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P		P	W	D	L	F	A	P
Braishfield	11	9	1	1	33	17	28	BTC Soton Vets B	11	7	3	1	28	13	24
Montefiore Halls	10	7	1	2	25	17	22	Michelmersh & T	11	6	3	2	27	16	21
Warsash Wasps	11	5	3	3	21	15	18	Totton OB *	11	6	3	2	24	16	20
Compton Res	8	4	3	1	22	11	15	Regents Park	8	5	2	1	24	12	17
London Airways	10	4	1	5	17	25	13	AFC Stoneham	10	4	3	3	26	15	15
Bottley Village	11	3	2	6	24	31	11	Langley Manor Vets	8	4	0	4	19	23	12
Bishops Waltham Dy	8	2	3	3	17	20	9	Redbridge OB	11	3	2	6	18	30	11
Applewood Joinery	9	2	2	5	22	25	8	Priory Rover Vets	12	2	4	6	20	30	10
Questmap *	10	1	3	6	17	27	5	Royal Mail	12	2	3	7	20	28	9
Hamble United	8	1	1	6	16	26	4	Compton Vets *	10	0	3	7	18	41	2
* one point deducted								* one point deducted							
Junior 3							Veterans Over 40								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P		P	W	D	L	F	A	P
AFC Botley	12	12	0	0	47	4	36	R & Woodfall	11	10	0	1	35	14	30
Priory Rovers	10	6	1	3	29	24	19	Hamble Club	11	8	1	2	31	13	25
Capital	10	5	3	2	21	20	18	BTC Soton O-40	11	6	4	1	48	26	12
Wellow	9	3	3	3	23	21	12	Old Tauntonians	10	5	3	2	28	15	18
Inmar	10	3	2	5	20	28	11	Sporting BTC O-40	13	4	2	7	22	25	14
AFC Phoenix XI	9	2	2	5	16	23	8	Bish Waltham D	10	4	1	5	44	26	13
Otterbourne A	11	2	2	7	21	37	8	Wildern OB	7	4	0	3	27	19	12
AFC Testwood	11	1	1	9	16	36	4	Langley Mnr O-40	13	3	2	8	48	53	11
Junior 4							Winchester OB								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	P								
AFC Station	9	5	3	1	17	13	18	Humble Plumb	10	00	10	4	93	0	
Athletico Romsey	9	5	2	2	26	8	17								
Shamblehurst	9	5	2	2	20	17	17								
New Forest	6	5	1	0	26	7	16								
Mitre	12	5	1	6	28	37	16								

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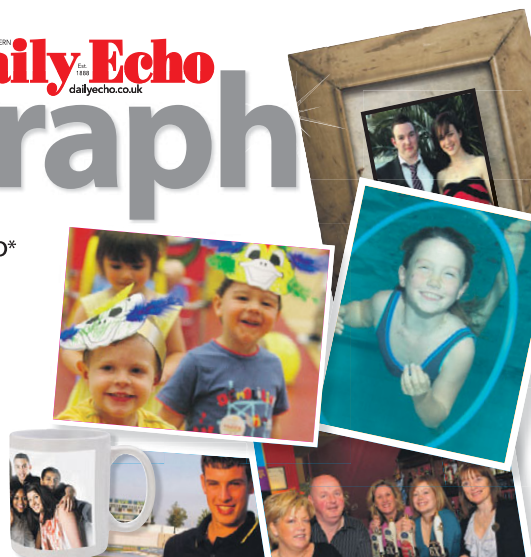


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Non-league Football

Hill sees Trophy as a real bonus

MANAGER Richard Hill is embracing Eastleigh's push for league and cup honours rather than viewing the FA Trophy as a distraction.

Including today, the Spitfires have four important Skril Conference South fixtures to ponder before they can even think about their FA Trophy quarter-final against Cambridge United on February 1, **WRITES WENDY GEE.**

But though fixtures are piling up thick and fast, Hill, pictured, does not adhere to the theory that the club's sparkling Trophy run is a potential hindrance to their Skril Conference South promotion push.

Instead, he views the Trophy as a bonus chapter in the Spitfires' potentially memorable success story.

"I don't class the Trophy as a distraction, it's just another part of the season we have to cope with," he said.

"We - the players and the staff - created this Trophy run and, to me, it's another element of an exciting season for this club.

"This is an exciting time to be manager of Eastleigh and an exciting time to be a player or supporter.

"If and when Bridle (club owners Bridle Insurance) ride off into the sunset - be that in five, ten or 15 years - people will look back and say 'what brilliant times those were, you should have seen the team Richard Hill had here.'

"I've never said we will win the Trophy, but I always said we could do well in it and now we're on the verge of a good run.

"Potentially we're at an exciting stage of the competition.

"If we'd gone out of the Trophy at Maidstone, the fans on the forum wouldn't have said 'never mind, let's concentrate on the league' they'd have slaughtered me for it.

"Now some people are saying it's a distraction, but we won't know until April if it's had a bearing on our league form.

"What I do know is that there's never been a better time to be connected with Eastleigh FC and people should embrace it more and be a bit more objective instead of taking it for granted."

Having seen off Dover Athletic 3-2 at the Silverlake, Eastleigh learned on Monday that their quarter-final opponents would be the winners of Tuesday's rematch between Conference Premier big guns Luton Town and Cambridge United.

In the event, it was Cambridge who came through the replay 1-0 thanks to a deflected Ashley Chambers strike.

With Eastleigh's league match against Dover rained off that night, Hill was among the 2,312 Kenilworth Road crowd.

Asked if he'd had any preference of quarter-final opponents, he said: "It doesn't matter what I want, you have to accept what you're given.

"We've got four very, very important league games coming up before then.

"When we drew Gateshead (two rounds ago) we didn't have a game in between, so we had ten days to channel all our energies into that tie.

"This time it's different. We've got four 'cup finals' to play before a quarter-final."

While Eastleigh's busy fixture list is bound to stretch the squad, Hill - a former Northampton, Watford and Oxford United player - said: "You try telling the players they need a rest!

"People say the Trophy's a distraction, but how did we go on years ago when we had 11 players, one sub and maybe two more squad members? The FA Cup was as important as the league back then and we never played a weakened side in it. "I'm not saying let's go back to the old days because football has changed and, in my opinion, it's changed for the better.

"I've got 16 or 17 players in my squad and, if I changed the team, would it be devalued in any way?

"As long as I've got 11 players and two good subs I'm happy for the odd week."

Spitfires star man Stuart Fleetwood has signed an extension to his contract, keeping him at the Silverlake until the end of 2014/15.

"It speaks volumes for Eastleigh that Stuart has committed for another season. It can only be good news for this football club," smiled Hill.



GLORY BOY: Craig McAllister scores the opener for Eastleigh, below, and celebrates, above.



EASTLEIGH V GOSPORT MATCH REPORT - SEE PAGE 13

Youth Football

TESTWOOD ON TRACK TO BE KINGS OF ENGLAND

TESTWOOD Sports College are through to the quarter-finals of the prestigious English Schools' FA Under-16 Premier League Cup.

A hat-trick by midfielder Matt Worthington fired them to an ultimately nervy 4-2 seventh-round win over Portishead-based Gordano School, writes **MIKE VIMPANY**.

Testwood's victory was based on a devastating three goals in five-minutes early in the first half, but the Totton youngsters had to repel a determined Gordano fightback before securing their quarter-final spot with Worthington's late hat-trick goal.

Their reward is a visit to either Woking's Winston Churchill School or Hampton School on Thameside.

Worthington, who is on AFC Bournemouth's books, stamped his authority on the tie by scoring Testwood's opening two goals and laying on the third for Ryan Hartley.

His first was a fine individual effort – Worthington bursting through from almost the halfway line before drilling a low left-foot drive into the goalkeeper's bottom right-hand corner.

Within minutes, Testwood were 2-0 up.

Hartley was fouled on the right-hand edge of the box and Worthington made no mistake from the resulting penalty kick.

The Cherries prospect wasn't finished.

With Gordano still reeling from a double blow, Worthington slid a slide-rule pass through for Hartley to draw the visitors' goalkeeper and score a third.

Fifteen minutes gone and Testwood were 3-0 up and in dreamland.

Coach Peter Brailey confirmed Testwood's tactics had been spot on.

"Our plan was to go hard and press high from the start of the game to try and create some early chances as Gordano had not conceded many goals throughout their run in the cup and we thought that if we did score a goal or two their heads may drop," he explained.

Gordano spent the remainder of the tie playing a serious game of

HAT-TRICK HERO: Matt Worthington, right, gets past a Gordano opponent.
Daily Echo pictures by Matt Watson
Order no: 17816344



catch-up, but when Nathan Douglas pulled one back, Testwood realised they had a game on their hands.

"We lost control of it in the last ten minutes of the first half," Brailey added.

And when Gordano got a second goal 14 minutes after the break it really was game on.

They were undone by Douglas, who held the ball up well on the left before picking out the impressive Kyle Eagan, to drill a rising shot into the roof of Callum Stanton's net.

The overall fitness of the Testwood side came into doubt as the north Somerset visitors began to call the tune.

Testwood stopped running and lacked real authority, particularly when defending set-pieces, but fortunately for them Gordano didn't have the cutting edge to take advantage.

Elliott Ripley wasted their best chance of an equaliser when, totally unchallenged, he headed a corner over Stanton's crossbar.

Just before that, Hartley burst through and, but for the goalkeeper's outstretched legs, would have settled it for Testwood, who stiffened up their midfield to reassume some control.

But the lively wide-man played his part in Worthington's late hat-trick goal which clinched Testwood's win.

He collected a pass from Ryan Lomax and teed up a perfect opportunity for Worthington to complete his match winning hat-trick.

The rain and a slippery 3G surface led to a feisty finish, but nothing was going to spoil the Testwood triumph.

"It's been a real team performance throughout the competition and I'm particularly proud of players such as



LOCKED IN COMBAT: Action from Testwood Sports College (red) v Gordano School. Order no: 17816353

Liam Bushrod, Cameron Baker, Kane Barry and Dan Richardson, who have stepped up a level and have coped really well," a relieved Brailey said afterwards.

"The spine of the team has been good with Callum Stanton in goal, Kris Longman and Ben Robert at centre back providing a solid defence to play out from.

"Ryan Lomax has moved into central midfield and provided some strength and a good range of passing alongside the engine of Dylan Gain.

"Connor Richards constantly provides an outlet on the right and his delivery has been excellent, while Matt Worthington has provided the drive and creativity just behind Ryan Hartley, who works tirelessly chasing and closing down everything and has also scored his share of the goals and creating assists."



BEST FOOT FORWARD: Action from Testwood Sports College (red) v Gordano School. Order no: 17816350

College hit back

TWO late goals enabled Richard Taunton College to claw back a 3-1 deficit and hold Hampshire Sixth Form College champions Itchen 3-3 on Southampton Solent University's 3G surface.

Itchen paid the price for missing a hatful of chances and were held to a draw for the third time this season.

There was a taste of what was to come when Callum Parker's penalty on ten minutes was saved by the Richard Taunton keeper Shaun Weetch, who had an outstanding game.

Good goalkeeping and wasteful finishing kept the scores level until Itchen took the lead on 30 minutes through Kurtis Garraway.

But RTC were dangerous on the break, and equalised through Sam Long on half-time.

Itchen regained the lead on the hour mark when Callum Parker tapped in and Matt Gray extended the lead to 3-1 with an excellent individual goal.

Richard Taunton's responded with 12 minutes left through Babu Bajong, and their fighting spirit was rewarded in the final few minutes when a long range effort from Ryan Fuller deflected in off an Itchen defender.

Itchen are still eight points clear at the top – South Downs climbing into second on the back of a 10-1 thumping of Totton.

Brockenhurst dominated Bournemouth for much of the game, but Sammy Brichard grabbed a deflected equaliser to earn the visitors a 1-1 draw.

The only other match to survive the elements saw a 2-2 draw for Peter Symonds against visiting Farnborough – Tom Nicholls scoring both the hosts' goals.

The Winchester-based college took another step closer towards winning the Second XI title after clobbering Farnborough 10-1.

EMAIL TEAM PICTURES TO echosport@dailyecho.co.uk

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



Thorpe on the attack

BATTING coach Graham Thorpe has conceded that captain Alastair Cook might have got his tactics wrong at the end of England's dramatic one-wicket defeat in the second one-day international.

England were on the brink of securing their first win over Australia this winter only for a stunning 57-run last-wicket stand, between James Faulkner and Clint McKay, to snatch away victory.

Faulkner took the lead role as he smashed 69 from 47 balls, with all five of his sixes struck off Ben Stokes.

Faulkner was able to line up the Durham all-rounder, who bowled unchanged through the final 10 overs, and back-to-back maximums in the penultimate over reduced the task down to 12 from six balls.

Tim Bresnan's first three deliveries then all raced to the boundary to pile on yet more misery for Cook and his side as they slipped 2-0 down in the five-game series.

"I think if Alastair looked at it he'd be honest about it - maybe if he re-ran it again, the last part of that game, he may do things differently," Thorpe said.



GRAHAM THORPE

"We'll chat later about it. "At the same time you have to give an enormous amount of credit to Faulkner, who played fantastically well."

Cook and his England colleagues have little time to dwell on the defeat with the series on the line in Sydney tomorrow (Sunday).

Thorpe and the coaching staff have a tough job in lifting the players for the quick turnaround, and the 44-year-old former Test batsman knows anything but full commitment will most likely end badly again.

"The game comes again tomorrow. If we're not in the right state of mind it will be a very tough game for England," he said.

"If the guys are in the right state of mind and they're ready to look Australia in the eye again and get out there and perform, and play with pride, and keep developing themselves as cricketers then we'll stand a good chance tomorrow night. It's not the time for us to sulk and feel sorry for ourselves. We have to stand up and keep going forward."

Stuart Broad is set to return after his two-game break - to provide instant experience to the bowling department - while Eoin Morgan has recovered well despite going off with a tight calf following his century at the Gabba.

Thorpe hinted new faces could come in - after England were unchanged in Brisbane - as the tourists balance trying to find a winning formula.

Simon Walter
simon.walter@dailyecho.co.uk
CRICKET REPORTER

HAMPSHIRE will be preparing for the 2014 season in Barbados while England are there getting ready for the World T20.

But it remains to be seen which camp Danny Briggs, Michael Carberry and James Vince will be in come March.

All three have been included in England's provisional World Twenty20 squad, but who will make the cut when the squad is trimmed to 15 at the end of the month?

Briggs almost certainly will. With Graeme Swann retired, it is hard not to see the 23 year-old going to Bangladesh at the end of March.

England may well decide to field two spinners in Chittagong, where they will play all their group games; against New Zealand, Sri Lanka and South Africa, on March 22, 27 and 29.

I would expect Briggs to get the nod over James Tredwell if they go with one, but it will be a close call.

Both are nearing a century of T20 wickets for their counties, for whom they have comparable records, but it is their form in Australia and the Caribbean that will be key.

So far, they are relatively inexperienced at the highest level.

Swann has retired after playing in 39 T20 internationals while Tredwell and Briggs have played just 13 between them since making their respective debuts at the end of 2012.

Briggs' record shades it. He has five wickets at 29 to Tredwell's three at 55 and, although he spins the ball less, the Hampshire man's change of pace has been consistently effective in the shortest format.

The two T20 internationals against Australia on January 29 and 31 will help decide the 15, while the three games against the West Indies in Barbados in mid-March will go a long way to determining the XI.

Hampshire will be enjoying their fourth pre-season tour on the island when England are at Bridgetown.

But what are Carberry and Vince's chances?

As two of the most exciting players in last year's Friends Life t20 competition, they must stand a good chance should injury create an opportunity.

Certainly, Carberry cannot be far away after being in the squad that played Australia at the Ageas Bowl last September.

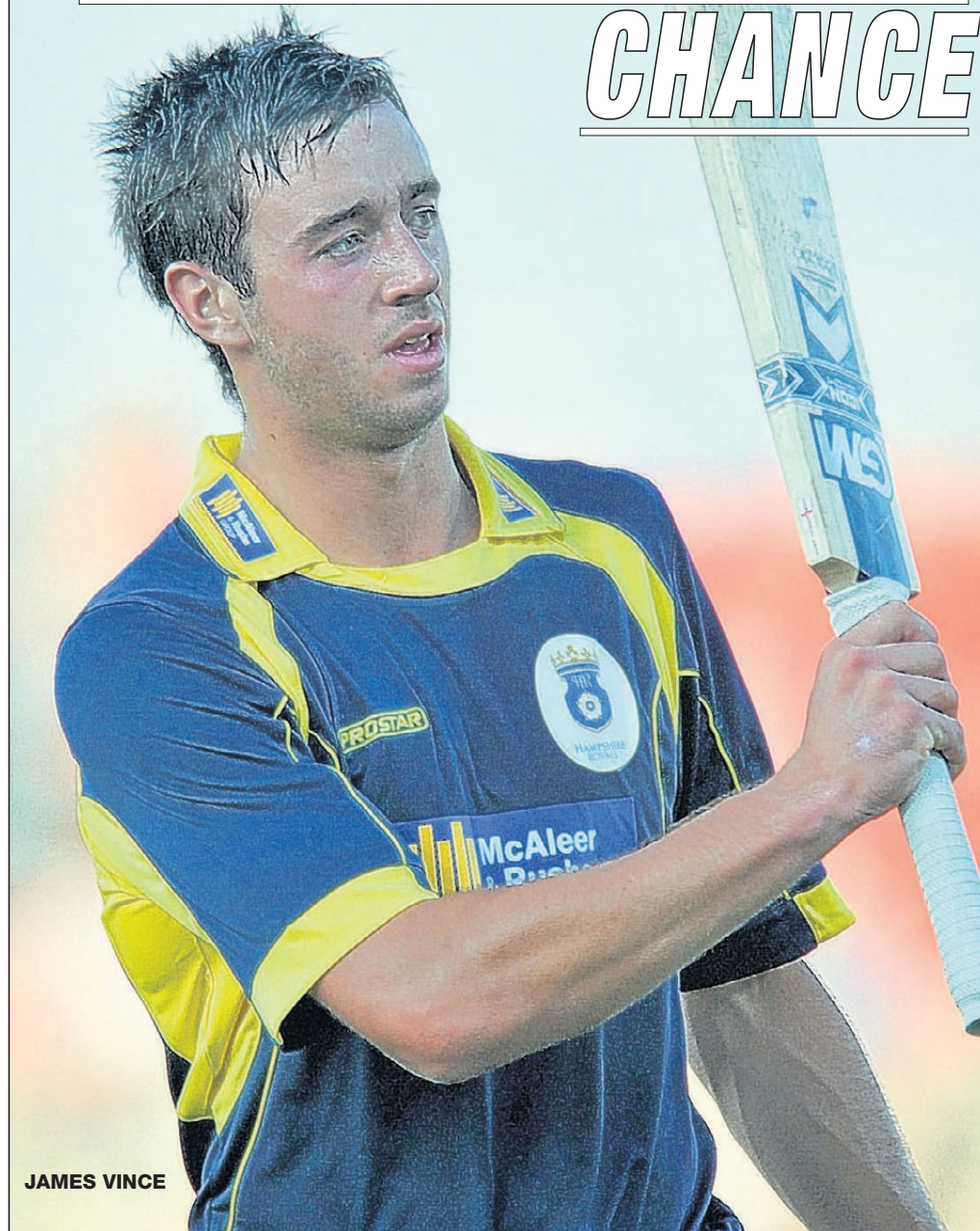
But I fear they will miss the World T20 cut. Neither were included in the current T20 squad in Australia.

Also counting against them is the likely return of Kevin Pietersen to England's T20 side and the established first-wicket combination of former Hampshire man Michael Lumb and Alex Hales.

But Vince will surely go on to play for England in all three formats. It is easy to forget he is still only 22.

Possible England World T20 XI: Lumb, Hales, Wright, Morgan, Root, Bopara, Stokes, Buttler, Broad, Briggs, Dernbach.

HANTS TRIO ARE IN WITH AN ENGLAND CHANCE



JAMES VINCE

England's provisional T20 squad: Possible England World T20 XI: Lumb, Hales, Wright, Morgan, Root, Bopara, Stokes, Buttler, Broad, Briggs, Dernbach.

England's provisional T20 squad: Stuart Broad (capt), Harry Gurney, Alex Hales, Michael Lumb, Samit Patel, James Taylor

(Nottinghamshire), Moeen Ali (Worcestershire), Jonathan Bairstow, **Tim Bresnan**, Gary Ballance, **Joe Root** (Yorkshire), Ravi **Bopara** (Essex), Scott Borthwick (Durham), **Danny Briggs**, Michael Carberry, James Vince (Hampshire), **Jos Buttler**, Steven Parry (Lancashire), **Jade Dernbach** (Surrey), **Eoin Morgan**, **Steven Finn** (Middlesex), Chris

Jordan, **Luke Wright** (Sussex), Craig Kieswetter (Somerset), Graham Onions, **Ben Stokes** (Durham), Kevin Pietersen (Surrey), **Boyd Rankin**, Chris Woakes (Warwickshire), **James Tredwell** (Kent).

*Players in bold make up the 15-man T20 squad that will take on Australia later this month

KEEP UP WITH CRICKET THROUGH THE YEAR IN THE DAILY ECHO

Hampshire Cricket Spotlight



MY PRIDE AT ENGLAND WOES – BAILEY



GEORGE Bailey believes Australia should take some pride in England's rate of attrition during their forgettable winter tour Down Under.

Paceman Steven Finn became the third England player to return home before their service was due to end, after problems with his bowling action had left him "not selectable".

Finn's early departure comes after Jonathan Trott and Graeme Swann were both unable to see out the tour.

Trott's early exit, with a stress-related illness after the first Test, was universally met with understanding while Swann retired after the Ashes were lost in Perth before Christmas.

Finn's troubles have been a symptom of his battle with his technique, which limited overs coach Ashley Giles admitted he would not cure in the competitive environment of an Australia tour.

England arrived to an ambush of media headlines off the field and, when the Ashes began, an aggressive Australia approach on it fast-tracked a 5-0 whitewash.

With the reputations of other England stars such as Kevin Pietersen, Matt Prior and James Anderson now also at their lowest point in recent memory – and skipper Alastair Cook under fire – former Hampshire player Bailey is unapologetic for the way Australia have turned around their fortunes.

Asked how he viewed the growing list of England players absent from the tour, Bailey said: "(I take) a little bit of pride in it.

"I guess in those terms that we are making it so uncomfortable for guys, whether that's through form or fitness.

"In the way we've played, and the intensity, and the media build-up of a series, it's been pretty big.

"There's no doubt there's been a lot of scrutiny.

"I think it is always challenging when you are a long way from home and from family and the things you know.

"With the shoe on the other foot, we've been in that situation before and know how challenging it is."

Bailey, pictured, is reticent to put Australia's success this winter down to a couple of well-aimed barbs on and off the field.

The 31-year-old believes coach Darren Lehmann's aggressive approach is more nuanced than some are giving him credit for.

"I'm sick of the sledging stuff to be honest," Bailey said.

"Just because you're aggressive, that seems to be a thing that everyone jumps towards.

"There's a myriad of ways you

can play cricket aggressively that doesn't have to head down that path.

"There's always stuff that's going to be said – I wouldn't read into the fact that just because there's two guys talking out there every time

that they're ripping each other's heads off.

"There's a lot of blokes out there who get along pretty well.

"The aggressive way we play is a mantra that is as much about the cricket as opposed to everything else.

"Darren has brought with him some values and a way that he wants us to play the one-day game. I think we're having a real crack at that.

"I still think we have a lot of work to go."

This winter has certainly proved too much for England in the Ashes and Australia were 1-0 up in the one-day international series heading into yesterday's second match in Brisbane.

While inflicting more pain on England is the immediate objective, Bailey is optimistic the foundations are being set

for a successful World Cup campaign on home soil in 12 months' time.

"We certainly hope it is," he said.

"We hope that it is a brand of cricket that will take us onwards and upwards to the World Cup.

"We hope it's a way of cricket that will not only be good enough for England in this series but will be good enough for the world come February next year."

No respite for Cook

CAPTAIN Alastair Cook admitted the England dressing room was "a tough place to be" after their winless run against Australia was extended by the most dramatic of one-wicket defeats in the second one-day international in Brisbane.

England – missing Hampshire's Michael Carberry despite the left-hander's 47 in a midweek warm-up game – were on the brink of finally beating Michael Clarke's side for the first time in 84 days since arriving Down Under, only to be denied by James Faulkner's unbeaten 69 from 47 balls.

When last man Clint McKay joined the all-rounder, Australia required 57 runs in six overs.

Faulkner responded to the danger with aggression, typical of Australia's cricket this summer, as he blasted away England's death bowling.

With 25 needed from ten balls, Faulkner hit Ben Stokes for back-to-back sixes, before smacking the 12 needed from Tim Bresnan's final over from the first three balls.

It meant Australia went 2-0 up in the five-game series, and also that Eoin Morgan's, pictured below, brilliant 106 was in vain after England posted 300 for eight batting first.

"It's an emotional dressing room right now and a pretty

tough place to be, but it was an astonishing innings (from Faulkner) that beat us," Cook said.

"So we did a lot of good things here. Obviously I'll have to look at our last few overs but I'm

proud of the way we got stuck in. "But little things needed to go our way and they didn't."

Cook did not attend the post-match press conference, with Morgan instead put forward to explain away this latest defeat.

The left-hander attempted to relay the positives of a performance that England did control for long periods – thanks largely to his 94-ball century – but admitted his team-mates could not help but feel they had let themselves down.

"Guys probably shouldn't be as harsh as they will be on themselves," Morgan said.

"Naturally they will be, but if you look through today's game we've done a lot of things right.

"It is quite tough. We let a good side come in at the end and we allowed them to play.

"We didn't finish as well as we would have liked. We're as surprised as anybody at the result.

"We let ourselves down a small bit. I think that can be said."

England's death bowling will come under closest scrutiny and Morgan admitted allowing Faulkner to retain the strike at the end proved fatal.

"We allowed James Faulkner to play like he does, which obviously isn't part of our plans," he said.

"With a number 11 batting at the other end you'd expect him to face the majority of the balls."



Rafa is on the warpath

RAFAEL Nadal sent a message to his rivals with a clinical display to defeat dangerous Frenchman Gael Monfils in the third round of the Australian Open.

Monfils, with his flashy shots and crowd-pleasing style, has caused a degree of trouble for Nadal in the past but not this time.

The Frenchman managed just three games in the first two sets and, although he fared better in the third, it was Nadal who eased to a 6-1 6-2 6-3 victory.

Things may have been different had Monfils responded to a break of his serve in the first game by hitting straight back.

He had three chances but each time Nadal found the answer, and it was not until the fifth game that Monfils got on the board.



RAFAEL NADAL

There were a smattering of stunning winners from the 27-year-old but far too many loose shots to put any pressure on his opponent.

The only concern for Nadal came in the fourth game of the second set when he slightly rolled his ankle, but he did not require any treatment and a run of four straight games followed.

Monfils began to serve better in the third set and for the first time managed sustained pressure on the Nadal delivery, but every break point was met with rock solid play by the world number one.

And it was no surprise when Monfils blazed a forehand metres over the baseline to hand Nadal the break and a chance to serve for the match.

He took it with the minimum of fuss and goes forward to a fourth-round meeting with Japan's Kei Nishikori.



TOUGH GOING:
The draw is not easy for Roger Federer in the Australian Open.

IT'S D-DAY FOR FEDS

THINGS are about to get tough for Roger Federer at the Australian Open.

The Swiss has cruised through three rounds, but now faces having to beat Jo-Wilfried Tsonga, Andy Murray, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic if he is to lift the trophy.

Federer arrived in Melbourne radiating positivity, declaring himself free of the back problems that contributed to his 2013 struggles and happy with his new racquet.

Victories over James Duckworth, Blaz Kavcic and, on Saturday, Teymuraz Gabashvili have told little about his prospects of being a grand slam force once again.

Monday's clash against 10th seed Tsonga should certainly change that, with the Frenchman also yet to drop a set.

Federer and Tsonga have met 13 times before, with the Swiss winning nine of them, but Tsonga has prevailed twice at grand slams.

When they played in the quarter-finals here last year, Federer won in five

sets. The sixth seed said: "This is clearly a tough draw I have had, especially looking forward now. But it's important for me that I keep playing well and I don't go crazy about who I play now."

"I'm happy that from my side I'm winning my matches in straight sets. It's been different conditions every match. So it's just good to get through and get a good feel out there."

If the jury is still out on Federer, Rafael Nadal sent a warning to his title rivals with a clinical dismantling of Gael Monfils.

The flashy Frenchman simply could not cope with Nadal's consistent excellence and the world number one ran out a 6-1 6-2 6-3 winner.

Nadal, of course, will not be getting carried away, the top seed saying: "I think I played a great match. I'm very happy the way that I played against a very tough opponent like Gael."

"That makes the level that I played tonight better. But that's it. Just one very good day. That makes me feel confident, but I am in the

fourth round. That's all."

Next up for Nadal is Japan's Kei Nishikori, who won 17 of the last 18 games in beating Donald Young 7-5 6-1 6-0.

The defeat of Young, who was struggling with a shoulder injury, means the USA once again has no men in the last 16 of a grand slam.

Grigor Dimitrov served notice that his time may finally be coming as victory over Milos Raonic took him through to the fourth round of a slam for the first time.



ANDY MURRAY

The Bulgarian has been tipped for stardom since his junior days, but has struggled to develop the physical attributes needed at the top level of tennis these days.

Since linking up with Australian coach Roger Rasheed last season, however, he appears to have stepped up a level.

Dimitrov, 22, won his first ATP Tour title in Stockholm in October and headed to Melbourne at a career-high ranking of 22nd.

It was very much a meeting of the next generation against 23-year-old Raonic, ranked 11th, but it was Dimitrov who proved the more consistent in a 6-3 3-6 6-4 7-6 (12/10) victory.

Dimitrov said: "I'm definitely satisfied that I have gone through that match. I think that's not going to be the last time that I play against Milos."

"I think it's a great stepping stone for me to get into that second week that I keep talking about. But I have practised a lot. I have done a lot of homework. So, to me, in a way it's a bit expected."

Dimitrov admitted the

expectations of him have been difficult to live with, saying: "They play in my head sometimes."

"It's not easy, obviously. Of course everyone would talk and everyone would say whatever. But the one thing is that I know what I believe in and I know what I'm doing."

Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut followed up his upset win over fifth seed Juan Martin del Potro with a hugely impressive 6-2 6-1 6-4 victory against 27th seed Benoit Paire and plays Dimitrov next.

France's Stephane Robert, meanwhile, won the battle of the lucky losers against Martin Klizan 6-0 7-6 (7/2) 6-4.

The world number 119 is the lowest-ranked player left in the draw and the first lucky loser ever to reach the fourth round in Melbourne.

Defending champion Novak Djokovic is likely to face his first test on Sunday against talented Italian Fabio Fognini, while third seed David Ferrer plays German Florian Mayer.

KEEP UP WITH SPORT THROUGH THE YEAR IN THE DAILY ECHO

Horse Racing

BALLISTA TO FIRE HOME

TOM Dascombe's high-class sprinter Ballista is fancied to secure his second successive victory in the Racing Post Celebrates 200,000 Social Followers Conditions Stakes at Kempton.

The six-year-old enjoyed a decent campaign in 2013, kicking off his season with some good runs in Dubai before making a winning return to British turf action in a warm conditions event at Chester in May.

He failed to make a significant impact on his next four starts, but the usually habitual front-runner did fare a little better under a change of tactics at Lingfield in December, finishing seventh without landing a telling blow from a wide draw.

He was again held on to a little longer than has been the case in the past on his latest appearance at Wolverhampton on Boxing Day and this time it paid off, with Richard Kingscote's mount showing smart acceleration to take top honours by a neck.

Seemingly less one dimensional than he used to be now he has learned to settle, it could be that Ballista is ready to take his game to another level.

His rating of 104 gives him every chance in this six-furlong contest if things go his way.

Strong Man made the favourite pull out all the stops when second at Southwell last time and his turn can come in the Racing Post Celebrates 100,000 Facebook Likes Handicap.

The six-year-old was a 20-1 shot on that occasion and while the Fibresand surface was probably not ideal, he performed much better than the market suggested he would.

Strong Man has not won since last July but having slipped down the handicap a bit, he is back to somewhere near a winning mark and will also appreciate the switch back to Polytrack.

Mansonien L'As must have solid claims in the Macmillan Cancer Support Charity Handicap Chase at Towcester.

Twice a winner for Ferdy Murphy before

his move to France last year, the eight-year-old is now with Donald McCain and got on the board for his new trainer in some style here on Boxing Day.

He will encounter similarly demanding conditions on his return and ought to go well again despite a career-high mark of 95.

Pure Science is the choice as he drops back in trip for the Haygain Hay Steamers Clean Healthy Forage Handicap Hurdle.

Nigel Twiston-Davies switched him up to three miles at Chepstow over Christmas but he did not appear to be suited by the longer trip as he merely plugged on to finish fourth.

Pure Science should be effective enough over this two miles and five furlongs and he is off a 11lb lighter mark this time too.

The Visit The Forum On gg.com Novices' Hurdle can see Knockanrawley get back to winning ways for Kim Bailey.

As an Irish point-to-point graduate, a demanding circuit such as Towcester was always likely to play to his strengths and he

got the job done over hurdles at the first time of asking in November, beating smart stablemate Silver Eagle.

Knockanrawley lost nothing in defeat back here last month as he was denied by Tony McCoy and Mountain Tunes, the horse who had previously given the perennial champion jockey his 4,000th winner, and this step up to three miles should see him in an even better light.

He can take this prize before going on to make a smart staying chaser next season.

SELECTIONS

FAIRYHOUSE: 12.50 Daneking, 1.20 Gitane Du Berlais, 1.50 Windsor Queen, 2.20 Art Of Logistics, 2.50 Grand Jesture, 3.20 Classic Event, 3.50 Most Peculiar.

KEMPTON: 1.30 Welsh Inlet, 2.00 Strong Man, 2.30 Reality Show, 3.00 The Ginger Berry, 3.30 Iceblast, 4.00 BALLISTA (NAP), 4.30 Archie Rice, 4.30 Jackie Love.

TOWCESTER: 1.10 Polstar, 1.40 Mansonien L'As, 2.10 Pure Science, 2.40 Hector's House, 3.10 Knockanrawley, 3.40 Gunnemey, 4.10 It's A Doodle.

DOUBLE: Ballista and Strong Man.

KEMPTON

Going: Standard

1.30 RACING POST CELEBRATES 100,000 TWITTER FOLLOWERS HANDICAP (CLASS 6). £3,000 added 4YO PLUS 6f Penalty Value £1,941.

1	31020-	SWEET TALKING GUY (IRE) (103) (D) Mrs L Pearce 4 9 5 P Aspell 10
2	00622-	BIRDIE QUEEN (20) (G) M Moore 4 9 5 G Baker 2
3	14526-	RENOIR'S LADY (140) (D) J Tuite 6 9 5 M Lane 6
4	51330-	DIXIE GWALIA (57) (D) M Atwater 6 9 5 4
5	3005-0	DISHY GURU (15) (D) M Blanshard 5 9 5 L Keniry 3
6	0032-0	CELESTIAL DAWN (6) (D) J Waymes 5 9 5 L Morris 11
7	0401-0	SPELLMAKER (15) (CD) A Newcombe 5 9 4 E J Walsh (5) 8
8	6652-3	HAMIS AL BIN (IRE) (9) (D) J Bradley 5 9 4 A Kirby 9
9	00020-	MY SWEET LORD (23) (D) M Usher 4 9 4 D Probert 5
10	0260-4	OUTBID (95) A Carroll 4 9 4 M Coumbe (3) 1
11	6520-4	WELSH INLET (IRE) (4) (C) J Bridger 6 9 3 R White (7) 12
12	0500-	THRASOS (IRE) (146) Miss J Crowley 5 9 2 D Sweeney 7

BETTING: 3-1 Harris Al Bin, 7-2 Birdie Queen, 15-2 Outbid, My Sweet Lord, Welsh Inlet, 10-1 Dishy Guru, 16-1 Sweet Talking Guy, Renoir's Lady, Thrasos, Spellmaker, 20-1 others.

2.00 RACING POST CELEBRATES 100,000 FACEBOOK LIKES HANDICAP (CLASS 5). £4,250 added 4YO PLUS 7f Penalty Value £2,749.

1	02030-	SHEIKH THE REINS (IRE) (19) (CD) J Best 5 9 7 9
2	0300-4	KAKAPUKA (46) (CD) Mrs A Murphy 7 9 6 10
3	3320-3	SHAOLIN (IRE) (15) (BF) S Durack 4 9 6 G Baker 14
4	0020-2	STRONG MAN (12) (D) M W Easterby 6 9 6 J P Sullivan 12
5	42460-	AFKAR (IRE) (120) (D) C Brittain 6 9 6 L Morris 5
6	5234-5	MASAI MOON (17) (D) B Millman 10 9 5 P Millman (7) 13
7	2321-	SASAKI (40) (D) J R Jenkins 4 9 4 D Sweeney 7
8	0000-4	TOP OFFER (15) (D) C Cate 5 9 4 S W Kelly 3
9	2005-6	RED ART (IRE) (19) (D) A Newcombe 5 9 3 W Carson 2
10	30400-	THE HAPPY HAMMER (IRE) (66) (CD) E Stanford 6 9 2 R Tart (3) 6

11	15310-	FAB LOLLY (IRE) (48) (CD) J Bethell 4 9 2 A Kirby 11
12	31330-	FIRST CLASS (46) (CD) R Guest 6 9 1 D Probert 4
13	4542-	TARQUIN (IRE) (53) Kristin Stubbs 5 9 1 T Eaves 8
14	0300-	AL AOBAH (IRE) (22) B Gubby 9 8 13 M Lane 1

BETTING: 4-1 Sakash, 9-2 Shaolin, 13-2 Strong Man, 8-1 Top Offer, 10-1 Tarquin, Kakapuka, 12-1 Alfkar, First Class, 16-1 others.

2.30 BET THROUGH THE RACING POST MOBILE APP HANDICAP (DIV 1) (CLASS 6). £3,000 added 4YO PLUS 1m 4f Penalty Value £1,941.

1	056-1	REALITY SHOW (IRE) (10) (D) S A Harris 7 9 10 D Fentiman 6
2	30000-	THANE OF CAWDOIR (IRE) (20) (C) J Tuite 5 9 6 G Baker 4
3	0540-4	FAIR COMMENT (29) M Blanshard 4 9 3 D Sweeney 2
4	0040-	RHINESTONE REBEL (IRE) (46) P Hiatt 8 9 3 W Carson 11
5	6002-1	FIRE IN BABYLON (IRE) (9) (C) N Quinlan 6 9 1 A Beschizza 5
6	40005-	CTAPPERS (46) M Madgwick 5 9 0 L Morris 9
7	0000-4	ROWLESTONE LASS (38) R J Price 4 8 12 S W Kelly 3
8	53046-	MAYAN FLIGHT (IRE) (173) (CD) A Carroll 6 8 12 L Morris 10
9	0500-0	DOLLY COLUMAN (IRE) (CD) Miss Z Davidson 6 8 12 J Fahy 1
10	6700-6	POSTE RESTANTE (9) D M Simcock 4 8 11 M Lane 7
11	0700-	LAST CHANCE RANCH (J12) D Shaw 4 8 8 8

BETTING: 10-3 Fire In Babylon, 9-2 Reality Show, 7-1 Fair Comment, 11-1 Clappers, 14-1 Thane Of Cawdor, 16-1 Poste Restante, 33-1 Rhinestone Rebel, Mayan Flight, Rowlestone Lass, 50-1 others.

3.00 BET THROUGH THE RACING POST MOBILE APP HANDICAP (DIV 2) (CLASS 6). £3,000 added 4YO PLUS 1m 4f Penalty Value £1,941.

1	30050-	YES CHEF (20) (C) Gordon 7 9 7 A Kirby 6
2	02540-	BENNELONG (20) (CD) L Carter 8 9 4 A Quinn 9
3	03005-	LISAHANE BOG (20) (C) P Hedger 7 9 3 L Keniry 3
4	6500-6	BEGGERS BELIEF (4) (C) Miss Z Davidson 6 9 2 7
5	0555-4	REACH THE BEACH (J24) B Powell 5 9 0 S Donohoe 7
6	06001-	THE GINGER BERRY (20) Dr J Scargill 4 8 13 R Tart (3) 3
7	06030-	GAINSBOROUGH (20) (IRE) (46) H Chisman 9 8 12 2
8	60000-	JEER (IRE) (57) (CD) M W Easterby 10 8 12 J P Sullivan 8
9	0002-	DANCE (J45) B Millman 5 8 12 D Probert 4
10	20200-	OCEAN POWER (IRE) (29) R Phillips 4 8 6 Joe Doyle (7) 5

11 0000- TOP LINE BANKER (23) M Mullineux 4 8 8 10
BETTING: 7-2 Lisahane Bog, 5-1 Reach The Beach, 11-2 Bennelong, The Ginger Berry, 7-1 Yes Chef, 8-1 Beggars Belief, 12-1 Ocean Power, Dance, Jeer, 33-1 others.

3.30 FOLLOW RACINGPOST ON TWITTER HANDICAP (CLASS 5). £4,250 added 4YO PLUS 6f Penalty Value £2,749.

1	0043-4	BAJAN BEAR (11) (D) M Blanshard 6 9 7 D Probert 8
2	3545-3	RIGOLLETO (IRE) (11) (D) Mrs A Murphy 6 9 6 G Baker 1
3	041-24	ICEBLAST (8) (D) M W Easterby 6 9 5 J P Sullivan 5
4	6020-3	COLOURBEARER (IRE) (17) (D) J Bradley 7 9 5 R Kingscote 9
5	05440-	CEELO (89) (D) Mrs L Pearce 4 9 5 P Aspell 2
6	46030-	RAY OF JOY (33) (CD) J R Jenkins 8 9 5 D Sweeney 3
7	5540-5	INVIGILATOR (7) (CD) D Shaw 6 9 2 D Swift 10
8	06003-	AVONMORE STAR (19) (D) Mike Murphy 6 9 0 S W Kelly 7
9	0660-0	MAMMO SPIRIT (IRE) (10) (CD) A Newcombe 10 8 11 C Catlin 6
10	33-645	LASTKINGOFSCOTLAND (IRE) (9) (CD) C Dore 8 8 8 L Jones 4

BETTING: 4-1 Bajan Bear, 5-1 Iceblast, 6-1 Rigolletto, Avonmore Star, 7-1 Lastkingofscotland, Invigilator, 8-1 Colourbearer, 14-1 Ray Of Joy, Ceelo, 25-1 Mammo Spirit.

4.00 RACING POST CELEBRATES 200,000 SOCIAL FOLLOWERS CONDITIONS STAKES (CLASS 2). £19,750 added 4YO PLUS 6f Penalty Value £12,294.

1	30001-	BALLISTA (IRE) (24) (D) T Dascombe 6 9 2 R Kingscote 7
2	3600-0	CAPONE (IRE) (15) (CD) M Atwater 9 9 2 S W Kelly 1
3	2120-0	DARING DRAGON (10) (BF) Ed Walker 4 9 2 L Morris 5
4	1116-4	FOREST EDGE (IRE) (24) (CD) P Evans 5 9 2 A Kirby 6
5	03445-	HOOF IT (32) (D) M W Easterby 7 9 2 J P Sullivan 4
6	31010-	RUMMAGING (IRE) (30) (D) M Halford (IRE) 6 9 2 C P Hoban (3) 3
7	00540-	STONEFIELD FLYER (60) (D) K Dalgleish 5 9 2 T Eaves 2

BETTING: 2-1 Hoof It, 7-2 Forest Edge, Ballista, 4-1 Rummaging, 10-1 Capone, 16-1 Stonefield Flyer, 12-1 Daring Dragon.

TOWCESTER

Going: Heavy

1.10 HAYGAIN HAY STEAMERS CLEAN HEALTHY FORAGE MAIDEN HURDLE (CLASS 4). £6,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m Penalty Value £3,899.

1	502	AMPLEFORTH (13) I Williams 6 11 4 Will Kennedy
2	30	GREY EARL (30) R Lee 7 11 4 J Moore
3	F230P	MILORD (GER) (23) K Bailey 5 11 4 J Maguire
4	0-004	PINK GIN (31) (J) O'd 5 11 4 M Grant
5	3	POLSTAR (FR) (18) H Whittington 5 11 4 J M Davies
6	515	SILENT KNIGHT (IRE) (13) W Greatrex 5 11 4 N Fahy
7	00	THERE YOU ARE (45) Jonjo O'Neill 5 11 4 R McLernon
8	030P	THOM THUMB (IRE) (645) P Webber 8 11 4 James Best (3)
9	06	SPIRIT MINDED (13) G Smyth 6 10 11 D England
10	-56224	ALANJOU (FR) (107) (BF) J Snowden 4 10 7 B J Powell
11	5P	COLLINGBOURNEDUCIS (IR) (34) M Gates 4 10 7 Miss A Stirling (7)

BETTING: 5-4 Milord, 5-2 Ampleforth, 4-1 Alanjou, 12-1 Silent Knight, 16-1 Pink Gin, Polstar, 33-1 Grey Earl, There You Are, Thom Thumb, 66-1 others.

1.40 MACMILLAN CANCER SUPPORT CHARITY HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS 5). £5,000 added 5YO PLUS 3m 110yds Penalty Value £3,249.

1	315PPO	BISHOPHILL JACK (IRE) (30) (CD) K Bailey 8 11 12 J Kennedy
2	63-232	SMART EXIT (IRE) (31) Mrs P Robson 7 11 12 Joshua Moore (3)
3	2PP-31	MANSONIEN L'AS (FR) (24) (CD) D McCain 8 11 8 J Maguire
4	1-6333	MISS SAFFRON (56) (D) Mrs S Gardner 11 11 7 Miss L Gardner (5)
5	P42-30	BLACK IS BEAUTIFUL (FR) (30) (BF) R Lee 6 11 6 J Popham
6	3P4-13	SOMERBY (IRE) (68) (DJ)BF Mrs R Ford 11 11 0 A Thornton
7	512360	ARTIC NIGHT (FR) (28) N Twiston-Davies 8 10 12 D England

8	P56P04	TOP BENEFIT (IRE) (31) (D) R Harper 12 10 6 J Banks (5)
9	334B22	KILVERGAN BOY (IRE) (24) (C/D) N Twiston-Davies 10 10 1 S Twiston-Davies

BETTING: 9-4 Mansonien L'as, 3-1 Smart Exit, 13-2 Somerby, 8-1 Black Is Beautiful, 10-1 Kilvergan Boy, Samson Collonges, Miss Saffron, 16-1 Artic Night, 25-1 others.

2.10 HAYGAIN HAY STEAMERS CLEAN HEALTHY FORAGE HANDICAP HURDLE (CLASS 3). £10,000 added 4YO PLUS 2m 5f Penalty Value £6,498.

1	P0P-52	SPIRIT RIVER (FR) (35) (D) Dave Roberts 9 11 12 L Edwards
2	20121P	SWEETS HILL (NZ) (820) Jonjo O'Neill 10 11 12 R McLernon
3	13286-	SUNNY LEDGED (290) (C) Andrew Martin 9 11 7 Mr J Martin (7)
4	1151-	FISHING BIRD (IRE) (297) D Rees 9 11 7 P Moloney
5	5-4534	PURE SCIENCE (IRE) (22) N Twiston-Davies 6 11 4S Twiston-Davies
6	-05422	OSCAR PRAIRIE (IRE) (24) (D) W Greatrex 9 11 4Mr W Featherstone
7	P230P3	ASTIGOS (FR) (3) (D) Miss V Williams 7 10 11 A Coleman
8	56002P	PHARE ISLE (IRE) (17) (C) B Case 9 10 10 Mr M J Kendrick (7)
9	/1PPO-	ROUND THE HORN (IRE) (379) (C) J Oid 14 10 3 M Grant
10	-05422	AMERICAN LIFE (FR) (9) A Middleton 7 10 10 J Banks (5)

BETTING: 7-2 Astigos, 5-1 Fishing Bird, American Life, 6-1 Phare Isle, 13-2 Sweeps Hill, 7-1 Pure Science, 12-1 Spirit River, 14-1 Oscar Prairie, 16-1 others.

2.40 IN MEMORY OF JUANITA ROGERS HANDICAP CHASE (CLASS 5). £5,000 added

5YO PLUS 2m 110yds Penalty Value £3,249.

1	0-035U	FRECKLE FACE (31) W G M Turner 7 11 12 T Phelan
2	660034	FINTAN (19) (D) M S Young 11 11 6 D Costello
3	435446	HIGHLAND RIVER (12) (C) Dave Roberts 8 10 8 L Edwards
4	32455-	BEAUCHAMP VIKING (478) (CD) Hugo Froud 10 10 8 C Bolger
5	368-05	MEZARAT (ITY) (210) M Gates 9 10 0 Miss A Stirling (7)
6	263-32	HECTOR'S HOUSE (59) (D) Mrs N Evans 8 10 0 R T Dunne (3)
7	6P0363	PANTHERS RUN (9) (D) J Hayes 14 10 0 J Kingston (9)

BETTING: 5-2 Freckle Face, 3-1 Fintan, 9-2 Mezarat, 5-1 Hector's House, 8-1 Beauchamp Viking, 12-1 Panthers Run, Highland River.

3.10 VISIT THE FORUM ON GG.COM NOVICES' HURDLE (CLASS 4). £6,000 added 5YO PLUS 3m Penalty Value £3,899.

1	63-112	KNOCKANRAWLEY (IRE) (31) (C/D) K Bailey 6 11 4 J Maguire
2	242	GORSKY ISLAND (33) T R George 6 10 12 A Conlon (5)
3	245513	IVY GATE (IRE) (31) Jonjo O'Neill 6 10 12 M Linehan (5)
4	53-235	KAUKIAS (IRE) (210) M Gates 9 10 7 R McLernon
5	042-22	KRIS SPIN (IRE) (45) R Lee 6 10 12 R Johnson
6	P2-R33	SPIKE MAC (IRE) (101) R Harper 9 10 12 A Thornton
7	111-62	SYBARITE (FR) (29) (D) N Twiston-Davies 8 10 12 S Twiston-Davies
8	3224-F	TIDAL DANCE (IRE) (8) (BF) Miss V Williams 7 10 12 A Coleman

BETTING: 11-4 Knockanrawley, 3-1 Kris Spin, 4-1 Tidal Dance, 9-2 Sybarite, 7-1 Ivy Gate, 8-1 Gorsky Island, 33-1 Kaukias, 66-1 Spike Mac.

3.40 CGA FOXHUNTER TRAIL HUNTERS' CHASE (CLASS 6). £2,000 added 5YO PLUS 3m 110yds Penalty Value £1,248.

1	211U1/	LORIKARAD (FR) (668) (C/D) Miss C C Jones 10 12 6Mr L Payer (5)
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Sunday's runners

4.30 LIKE RACING POST ON FACEBOOK HANDICAP (CLASS 5). £4,250 added 4YO PLUS 1m 3f Penalty Value £2,749.

1	34244-	INCENDO (43) (C) I Williams 8 9 10 S Donohoe 6
2	1002-2	TRAVELLING (11) (C) A Carroll 5 9 8 W Carson 9
3	0535-1	ARCHIE RICE (USA) (8) T Keddy 8 9 8 R Tart (3) 12
4	00000-	REFLECT (IRE) (46) (CD) D Shaw 6 9 7 D Swift 8
5	43230-	LEITRIM PASS (USA) (19) (BF) W Haggas 4 9 6 S W Kelly 4
6	0433-3	RED DRAGON (IRE) (11) (C) M Blanshard 4 9 5 D Sweeney 2
7	42055-	MAGNOLIA RIDGE (IRE) (24) Kristin Stubbs 4 9 5 T Eaves 5
8	54212-	BOBS HER UNCLE (54) (C) (BF) J Bethell 5 9 3 A Kirby 3
9	30015-	ARTISTICAL (IRE) (54) (C) L Carter 4 9 3 A Quinn 1
10	0420-0	SUGAR HICCUP (IRE) (20) Jim Best 6 9 3 11
11	00020-	TOP DIKTAT (54) G L Moore 6 9 2 H Crouch (7) 7
12	2213-2	KEENE (9) (BF) P McBride 4 9 0 L Steward (7) 13
13	4020-0	FLAG OF GLORY (11) (C) P Hiatt 7 8 13 C Catlin 10

BETTING: 10-3 Bobs Her Uncle, 11-2 Red Dragon, Archie Rice, 7-1 Travelling, 8-1 Keene, 10-1 Leitrim Pass, 12-1 Top Diktat, Incendo, Artistical, 14-1 others.

5.00 DOWNLOAD THE RACING POST IPAD APP HANDICAP (CLASS 6). £3,000 added 4YO PLUS 7f Penalty Value £1,941.

1	060-	LITTLE RED NELL (IRE) (47) M Bosley 5 9 7 G Baker 5
2	40660-	MY LEARNED FRIEND (IRE) (20) (D) A Baiding 10 9 7 J Garrity (7) 12
3	24220-	MY SCAT DADDY (USA) (560) (DJ)BF Miss Z Davidson 5 9 6 J Fahy 10
4	2326-0	GLENNTEN (9) S Kirk 5 9 5 Renato Souza 7
5	326-03	MEDAM (7) S A Harris 5 9 5 N Farley (3) 3
6	005-33	M



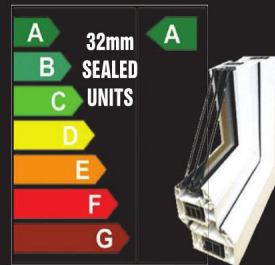
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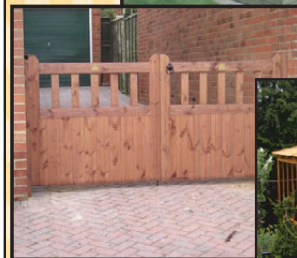
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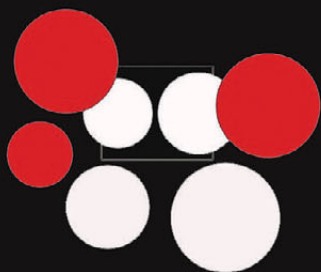
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Barclays Premier League

Arsenal	2	Fulham	0
Cazorla 57, 62		Att 60,000	
HT 0-0			
Crystal P.	1	Stoke	0
Puncheon 51		Att 24,440	
HT 0-0			
Liverpool	L	A. Villa	L
HT L-L			
Man City	4	Cardiff	2
Dzeko 14, Jesus Navas 33		Noone 29	
Toure 76, Agüero 79		Campbell 90	
HT 2-1		Att 47,213	
Norwich	1	Hull	0
Bennett 87		Att 26,655	
HT 0-0			
Sunderland	2	SAINTS	2
Borini 32		Rodriguez 4	
Johnson 71		Lovren 31	
HT 1-2		Att 38,115	
West Ham	1	Newcastle	3
Williamson 45 og		Cabaye 16, 90, Remy 33	
HT 1-2		Att 33,343	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Arsenal	22	8	2	1	20	6	8	1	2	23	13	51
Man City	22	11	0	0	42	8	5	2	4	21	17	50
Chelsea	21	9	1	0	22	8	5	3	3	18	11	46
Liverpool	21	9	0	1	27	6	4	3	4	24	20	42
Everton	21	7	3	1	21	9	4	5	1	13	10	41
Spurs	21	5	3	3	13	13	7	1	2	13	12	40
Man Utd	21	5	2	4	14	10	6	2	2	21	14	37
Newcastle	22	5	3	3	17	12	6	0	5	15	16	36
SAINTS	22	5	3	3	17	12	3	4	4	12	13	31
Hull	22	5	3	3	15	8	1	2	8	7	20	23
A. Villa	21	2	2	7	8	16	4	3	3	12	11	23
Norwich	22	4	3	4	11	11	2	2	7	7	24	23
Stoke	22	4	5	2	14	12	1	2	8	8	24	22
Swansea	21	2	4	4	18	17	3	2	6	8	13	21
W.B.A.	21	3	3	4	12	12	1	6	4	11	16	21
Crystal P	22	4	2	5	9	14	2	0	9	5	17	20
Fulham	22	3	1	7	14	22	3	0	8	8	26	19
West Ham	22	2	2	6	13	19	2	3	6	9	14	18
Sunderland	22	2	2	7	12	19	2	4	5	9	17	18
Cardiff	22	3	3	5	10	17	1	3	7	7	21	18

SkyBet Championship

Barnsley	2	Blackpool	0
O'Grady 45 pen, 48		Att 9,866	
HT 1-0			
Birmingham	0	Yeovil	2
HT 0-2		Hayter 12, 605	
CHERRIES	1	Watford	0
Grabban 62 pen		Angella 45	
HT 0-1		Att 10,353	
Burnley	1	Sheff Wed	0
Vokes 43		Maguire 45	
HT 1-1		Att 13,735	
Derby City	1	Brighton	0
Bamford 76		Att 25,392	
HT 0-0			
Doncaster	3	Wigan	0
Brown 8, 69 pen, Coppinger 52		Att 8,331	
HT 1-0			
Leeds Utd	0	Leicester	1
HT 0-0		Nugent 88	
Middlesbro	1	Charlton	0
Ledesma 16		Att 14,548	
HT 1-0			
Millwall	1	Ipswich	0
Fredericks 40		Att 12,125	
HT 1-0			
Nottm For	4	Blackburn	0
Lansbury 15 pen, 34 pen		Marshall 37	
Paterson 72, Reid 90		Att 22,456	
HT 2-1			
Q.P.R.	2	Huddersfld	0
Austin 55, 79		Wells 68	
HT 0-0		Att 17,185	
Reading	7	Bolton	1
Le Fondre 12, 28, 33		Ngog 88	
Pogrebnyak 41 pen			
Gorkss 60, Akpan 74			
Blackman 78		Att 18,629	
HT 4-0			

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Leicester	26	10	2	1	27	13	8	1	4	20	14	57
Q.P.R.	26	10	2	1	18	5	5	5	3	13	11	52
Burnley	26	8	5	0	22	8	6	4	3	17	12	51
Derby City	26	6	3	4	24	18	8	2	3	26	16	47
Nottm For	26	7	4	2	22	12	4	7	2	17	14	44
Reading	26	6	5	2	25	13	5	3	5	14	17	41
Brighton	26	5	5	3	19	13	5	4	4	11	10	39
Blackburn	26	7	3	3	18	10	3	4	6	14	22	37
Middlesbro	26	6	5	2	23	12	3	4	6	18	21	36
Ipswich	26	6	3	4	21	15	3	6	4	16	16	36
Wigan	25	6	5	2	19	13	4	1	7	9	13	36
Leeds Utd	26	6	3	4	20	13	4	2	7	15	22	35
Huddersfld	26	6	4	3	23	15	3	3	7	12	16	34
Blackpool	26	5	4	4	13	13	3	4	6	12	20	32
Watford	25	4	3	6	17	16	3	7	2	19	15	31
CHERRIES	26	5	3	5	17	16	3	4	6	15	29	31
Birmingham	26	2	6	5	15	14	5	2	6	15	18	29
Bolton	26	2	8	3	16	14	4	2	7	15	28	28
Sheff Wed	25	4	3	5	22	15	1	8	4	10	18	26
Millwall	26	5	3	5	17	20	1	4	8	10	30	25
Charlton	25	3	4	5	11	14	2	5	6	11	17	24
Doncaster	26	5	2	6	14	19	1	4	8	8	24	24
Yeovil	25	2	2	8	8	15	3	3	7	13	23	20
Barnsley	25	3	5	5	14	23	1	3	8	9	19	20

SkyBet League One

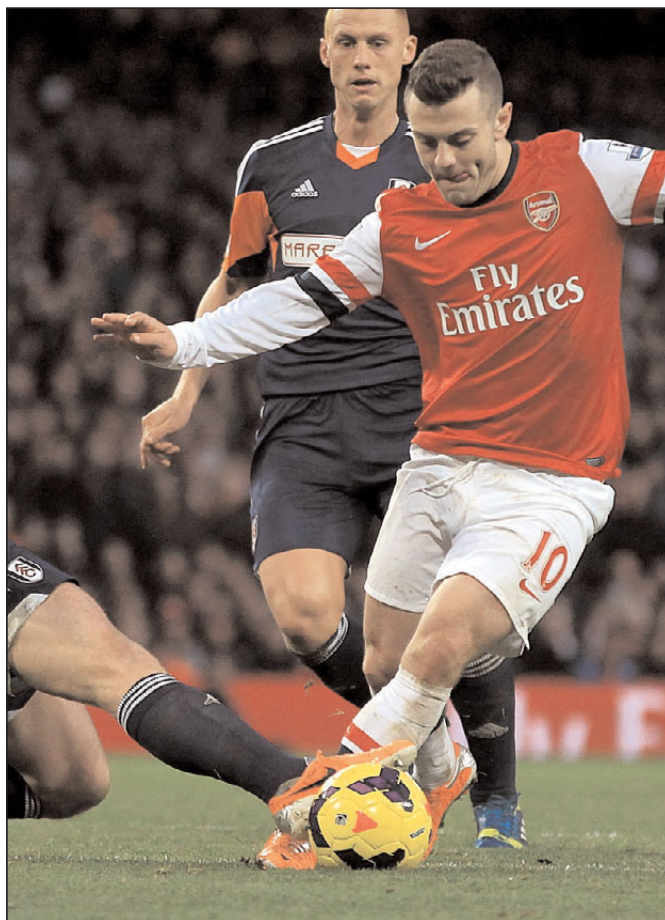
Bristol C	2	M K Dons	2
Baldock 57, 76		Williams 17	
HT 0-2		Reeves 36	
Carlisle	2	Colchester	4
Okuonghae 19 og		Watt 16, 45	
Ehmer 90		Bean 68	
HT 0-0		Ehmer 75 og	
HT 1-2		Att 3,688	
Crawley	P	Wolves	P
Postponed - due to waterlogged pitch.			
Crewe	1	Leyton O	2
Moore 53		Dagnall 60, 68	
HT 0-0		Att 4,830	
Gillingham	2	Swindon	0
Legge 18			
Harriman 83		Att 6,134	
HT 1-0			
Peterboro	3	Tranmere	0
Assombalonga 5 pen, 87			
Ajose 75		Att 5,297	
HT 1-0			
Port Vale	1	Oldham	0
Grimmer 53		Att 6,002	
HT 0-0			
Preston	1	Coventry	1
Davies 54		Moussa 90	
HT 0-0		Att 10,671	
Sheff Utd	2	Bradford	2
Murphy 8		Jones 56	
Maguire 40		Hanson 63	
HT 2-0		Att 18,794	
Shrewsbury	0	Rotherham	3
		Hitchcock 10	
		Pringle 18	
		Tavernier 21	
		Att 5,116	
HT 0-3			
Stevenage	0	Notts Cnty	1
		Ball 42	
		Att 2,877	
HT 0-1			
Walsall	1	Brentford	1
Westcarr 45		Donaldson 30	
HT 1-1		Att 5,295	

	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Leyton O	26	7	2	2	24	10	4	1	3	24	15	57
Brentford	26	10	1	2	25	10	7	4	2	20	14	56
Wolves	26	9	3	2	23	8	6	4	2	18	11	52
Preston	26	5	6	4	13	16	8	3	2	18	11	48
Rotherham	26	4	6	3	23	22	8	2	3	22	12	44
Peterboro	26	8	1	4	16	12	5	2	6	24	20	42
Walsall	27	6	3	4	15	14	5	6	3	15	10	42
Port Vale	26	7	3	2	20	16	5	0	8	17	23	39
Swindon	26	9	1	2	28	15	2	3	9	14	21	37
M K Dons	25	7	3	3	24	16	3	3	6	17	20	36
Coventry	26	7	4	3	32	29	5	4	3	23	16	34
Colchester	26	5	3	5	18	17	3	7	3	17	17	33
Bradford	26	4	6	3	22	14	3	6	4	16	18	34
Gillingham	27	6	4	5	20	18	1	1	8	15	27	32
Crawley	24	5	4	4	13	15	2	5	4	14	17	30
Notts Cnty	27	6	1	6	20	14	2	2	10	13	25	27
Oldham	26	4	3	4	11	11	3	3	9	16	23	27
Carlisle	26	5	2	6	19	26	2	4	7	9	21	27
Shrewsbury	27	4	4	7	12	15	2	4	6	14	20	26
Sheff Utd	26	5	5	3	18	14	1	3	9	8	21	26
Tranmere	26	2	5	5	15	25	4	2	8	14	23	25
Bristol C	25	3	6	5	19	20	1	6	4	17	19	24
Crewe	26	4	4	5	14	21	2	2	9	11	32	24
Stevenage	26	3	2	7	12	18	3	2	9	12	26	22

*Coventry deducted 10 points for entering administration

SkyBet League Two

Bury	0	Burton Albion	0
HT 0-0		Att 2,910	
Cheltenham	1	Acc Stanley	1
Cureton 72		Bowman 15	
HT 0-2		Joyce 43	
Exeter	P	Morecambe	P
Postponed - due to waterlogged pitch.			
Fleetwood Twn	2	Hartlepool	0
Parkin 67			
Marrow 69		Att 3,009	
HT 0-0			
Newport Cnty	P	Dagenham	P
Postponed - due to waterlogged pitch.			
POMPEY	1	Mansfield	1
Taylor 78		Stevenson 51	
HT 0-0		Att 14,686	
Rochdale	3	Plymouth	0
Allen 5			
Henderson 76		Att 2,839	
Rose 89			
HT 1-0			
Scunthorpe	0	AFC Wimbledon	0
HT 0-0		Att 4,326	
Southend	3	Chesterfld	0
Leonard 59			
Corr 61		Att 6,256	
HT 1-0			
Torquay	P	Northampton	P
Postponed - due to waterlogged pitch.			
Wycombe	0	Oxford Utd	1
		Wroe 87	
		Att 5,751	
HT 0-0			
York	0	Bristol R	0
HT 0-0		Att 3,514	



Jack Wilshere on the attack for Arsenal against Fulham.

	HOME						AWAY					
	P	W	D	L	F	A	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Scunthorpe	26	7	3	3	16	9	6	6	2	22	15	48
Rochdale	26	10	1	3	29	15	4	3	5	12	16	46
Burton Albion	26	7	3	4	15	12	6	4	2	14	11	46
Southend	26	7	3	3	19	10	6	3	4	15	12	45
Chesterfield	25	7	5	2	20	9	5	3	3	17	13	44
Fleetwood T	25	7	2	4	28	19	7	0	5	12	10	44
Oxford Utd	25	4	5	5	14	14	7	4	0	21	7	42
Newport C	24	7	1	2	22	11	3	7	4	12	16	38
Morecambe	27	5	4	5	19	17	5	2	6	12	18	37
Dagenham	26	7	2	3	17	8	2	5	7	15	24	34
Plymouth	26	6	4	3	11	10	3	3	7	12	19	34
Cheltenham	26	3	7	4	19	19	5	2	5	14	18	33
York	27	5	5	3	15	11	2	6	6	17	21	32
Wimbledon	26	5	4	4	16	13	3	4	6	11	16	32
Exeter	25	4	1	6	11	16	5	4	5	20	18	32
Hartlepool	26	5	2	6	13	17	3	5	5	14	16	31
Mansfield	27	2	4	6	14	18	5	5	5	13	18	30
Accr Stanley	26	3	6	5	18	19	4	2	6	13	19	29
Bury	26	4	7	3	16	14	2	3	7	14	20	28
Wycombe	25	3	3	7	12	18	4	4	4	18	16	28
POMPEY	26	5	3	6	17	18	1	7	4	13	21	28
Bristol R	25	5	4	2	15	10	1	5	8	7	16	27
Torquay	26	2	7	4	12	18	4	3	9	15	22	26
Northampton	25	3	4	4	12	15	2	1	8	7	18	22